SACRED SONGS OF THE CENTRAL ALTAR: TEXTS AND HISTORIES OF THE RITUAL MASTER IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD OF SOUTHERN TAIWAN

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the ritual manuscripts used by Ritual Masters in the Táinán region of southern Táiwān and shows that the kind of lyric invocations used in this and similar traditions employ literary conventions, ritual techniques, and religious symbols that developed in tandem with the broader Ritual Master tradition during the Sòng dynasty. In turn, the specific characteristics of these lyric invocations directly express the central elements of the Ritual Master tradition, while the history of these invocations and their related texts helps illuminate the historical formation of the tradition as a whole. To account for the nature of this broader tradition and its specific manifestations, I build on an earlier generation of scholarship to argue that the Ritual Master phenomenon is best understood as a historic movement, produced by interaction among Tantric adepts, Spirit-mediums, and Daoist exorcists, and that this movement manifests in two hemispheres or domains: one I call Tantric-Popular, and one more fully Daoist. Historical inquiry shows, however, that symbols and textual developments arising from ancient Daoist exorcism directly informed the entire movement and the genre of lyric invocations that would become the basis of those used across southeastern China, including in the Mínnán littoral and its diasporic communities.

In examining the ritual world of temple religion, I argue that there is a fundamental linkage between healing rites for individuals and the cultic life of community temples, and that this essential linkage is reflected in the integrated symbols of the religious system. Moreover, the Ritual Master or Minor Rite tradition in the Mínnán littoral does not merely provide individual-oriented "minor rites" of healing, but is rather the main ritual tradition responsible for the establishment, reproduction, and maintenance of the temple cult itself, and that this role exhibits great historical depth, as fundamental elements of the Tantric-Popular Ritual Master tradition have become universally embedded within

the structure of the temple-cult throughout the wider region, while certain Ritual Master rites are deemed mandatory to the establishment and maintenance of the temple-cult and its precinct.

Furthermore, the extent of Daoist integration within the networked temples of the Common Religion is overwhelmingly expressed in the general orientation of temples toward the symbols of a Daoist Heaven as experienced through the Daoist Jiào altar and its analogue, the Lord of Heaven Temple. Within a single temple's precinct, the Ritual Master and Spirit-medium tend to predominate, but where multiple temples are joined into temple-alliance networks, rites which mobilize the entire extended network tend to be large-scale Daoist Jiào. Hence there is a direct relationship between temple precinct organizations and the performance of Daoist ritual in Táinán (and elsewhere), though previous Western scholarship of Daoism in Táinán has not taken notice of these precinct alliance networks despite their central importance.

This study also argues that in Chinese historical sources of all kinds, the terms Wū 巫 and Wū-xí 巫覡, which originally meant "Spirit-medium," acquired a dual reference following the emergence of the Tantric-Popular Ritual Master in the Sòng, and that where historical texts of many kinds refer to both Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters as Wū, such usage is not merely the result of confusion or conflation, but reflects the specific relationships, historical and performative, that bind these two primary ritual experts of the Common Religion together. While Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters came to be labeled as Wū in these sources, Daoists are consistently excluded from this category, which further indicates the specificity with which historical authors used these terms. From late imperial gazetteers and other sources, we can observe the cultural and geographic ubiquity of Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums in Fújiàn and Táiwān from the Sòng dynasty and into the 20th century.

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Abbreviations

CXT Chéngxīn Tán 誠心壇

DFHY *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 道法會元

DZ *Dào Zàng* (the Daoist Canon) 道藏

EOT *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*

FHYZ *Fàhaǐ Yízhū* 法海遺珠

FJTZ *Fújiàn Tǒng Zhì* 重纂福建通志 （同治十年 [1871] edition)

Guǎngjì Tán 福建省龍巖市東肖鎮閭山教廣濟壇科儀本彙編

HST Héshèng Táng 和勝堂

Jiànyáng 福建省建陽市閭山派科儀本彙編

Lìyuán 福建省壽寧縣閭山梨園教科儀本彙編

TC *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the* Daozang

T. Taisho Buddhist Canon index number

TPGJ *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* 太平廣記

ZHDZ *Zhōnghuá Dàozàng* 中華道藏

Some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit said to them in reply, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered them all, and so overpowered them that they fled out of the house naked and wounded.

Acts 19:12-16, New Revised Standard Version

I reverently summon General Black Tiger of Dragon-Tiger Mountain,
Prime Marshal of the Golden Wheel, Grand General.
High up the mountain black, black mountain high.
High up the mountain, expel the fierce tiger,
Down to the water, slay the fell dragon.
In Heaven above pace the Seven Stars,
Beneath the earth, respond to my command.
The Sun and Moon together shine upon me,
Ghosts and gods see me and are thunderstruck.
I am the Celestial Master's Ritual Method,
Saving and assisting all the throng of living beings.
Thy disciple from the central altar summons,
Black Tiger swiftly descend!

General Black Tiger Invocation (HST 1:22)

黑虎將軍

謹請龍虎山黑虎將 金輪元帥大將軍
上山黑黑山上　　上山驅猛虎
下水斬蛟龍　　天上步七星
地下應我令　　日月同我照
鬼神見我驚　　我是天師法
救助諸眾生　　弟子中壇請
黑虎速降臨　　火急如律令

Introduction

This is a study which seeks to account for texts and historical contexts of the Ritual Master 法師(fǎ shī) tradition in and around Táinán 臺南 in southern Táiwān, where a cluster of related tradition-groups practice and transmit forms of ritual that are late imperial and modern manifestations of the historical Ritual Method 法 movement, the distinctive tradition of the Ritual Master, or Ritual Officer 法官 (fǎ guān), which took shape over the late Táng, Five Dynasties, and Sòng eras, and exerted transformative influence over Chinese religions. As Edward Davis and Poul Andersen have shown, the traditions and liturgical position of the Ritual Master were formed through a long but historically quickened process of confrontation and exchange among Daoist priests, Tantric adepts, and Spirit-mediums.[1] This long history of conflict and synthesis is prominently inscribed within the ritual texts and religious contexts of the living Ritual Master tradition, and examination of the religion in practice everywhere confronts us with this history and its enduring legacies. Only when seen in the light of these historical relationships does the Ritual Master tradition and its place within a pluralistic religious culture become clear.

In seeking to account for the texts and traditions of the Táinán-area Ritual Masters, the evidence encountered and the issues raised necessitate a reexamination of this broader history, and a reformulation of how to approach the complex but congruent forms of ritual that have been practiced by Ritual Masters since the Sòng dynasty. This historic synthesis among priestly and mediumistic forms of ritual generated a range of related traditions which I will present as forming a Ritual Method 法 (fǎ) movement which has, in history and practice, manifested in two

[1] Edward Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Sung China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001); Poul Andersen, *Taoist Ritual Texts and Traditions, with Special Reference to* Bugang*, the Cosmic Dance*. PhD thesis (University of Copenhagen, 1990).

interpenetrating but distinctive hemispheres: one more overtly Tantric and Popular in content, transmitted independently of –but often in proximity with Daoist lineages, and one more formally Daoist, visible in the Sòng-Yúan-Míng forms of "exorcistic" Daoism and the major Ritual Method compendia of the Míng Daoist Canon, in which the Tantric and Popular symbols so central the Ritual Method synthesis have been somewhat rebranded through Daoist names, and progressively repositioned within a Daoist construction of authority.

The natures and histories of these resonant traditions become much clearer when viewed as related expressions of a broader Ritual Method movement, rather than sundering them into isolated and seldom-defined categories of "Daoism" 道教 and "Religion of Ritual" 法教, as is standard practice in most Chinese-language scholarship on the subject. As will be presented in the following study, these Daoist and Tantric-Popular modes of Ritual Method exhibit tremendous fluidity and mutual influence, but are nevertheless largely distinguished by their primary symbols of authority and modes of transmission. All are linked though the historical elements that engendered them, which bequeathed a common fund of liturgical techniques and a shared ritual orientation toward controlling the spirits enshrined in local cults and inhabiting the terrestrial environment.

The fluidity of symbols which characterizes Ritual Method arises from the common ritual language and orientation of the Ritual Method, while the prolix regional and local variation characteristic of the movement as a whole is made possible the fundamental premises of the Ritual Master tradition itself, in which pantheons of Ancestral Masters 祖師 (deified Ritual Masters, with whom the priest identifies in ritual) and ranks of fierce local spirits, subordinated to the Ritual Master's altar as Prime Marshals 元帥, Spirit Officers 靈官 and Spirit-generals 神將, constitute a

template and lexicon for variable permutation. These recombinant Ritual Master pantheons are in turn capable of being attached to local gods, as parts of a temple's own pantheons, and to the higher powers of the Daoist cosmic administration as units of a military bureaucracy. This dual direction of symbolic adhesion has exerted profound influence on both the structure of the Mínnán temple cult, and on the Daoist Jiào altar –the symbolic venue whereby local cults are most overtly joined into what I describe as a Daoist ritual cosmos, or what Kristofer Schipper first identified as a "Daoist ritual framework."

The Ritual Method in all its varieties is a specific synthesis formed through prolonged historical exchange among popular and elite forms of culture, priestly and mediumistic ritual, and between urban and rural spheres. In this interplay of mutual influences, there is a persistent preponderance of "bottom-up" factors emanating from the historic invigoration of local cults from the late Táng onward: the fierce martial deities of the Ritual Master's altar, drawn from local cults and laicized Tantric pantheons (themselves subdued local gods and demons of Indic origin), the centrality of Spirit-mediumship, its techniques and iconography, and ultimately the sheer ubiquity of Ritual Masters, primarily of the more Tantric-Popular variety, in local society throughout southern China.

Hence where Michel Strickmann famously described the Sòng emergence of new exorcistic (i.e. Ritual Method) forms of Daoism as heralding a "Taoist Renaissance," Poul Andersen has further argued that these developments represent "a renewal of Taoism, not simply from within, but as the result of a syncretism between popular mediumistic practices and the ancient forms of ritual transmitted by Zhengyi [Daoist] priests."[2] In the course of this study, I will

[2] Poul Andersen, "Tianxin Zhengfa 天心正法," EOT 991.

trace the history of several key elements of ancient Daoist exorcism, and show how these helped shape the Sòng-era Ritual Method synthesis.

As Edward Davis and Hsieh Shu-wei have emphasized,[3] this process of exchange among Daoists and mediums was significantly catalyzed by Tantric techniques of both monastic Buddhists and lineages of lay practitioners who wielded a cultural technology that from its Indic origins specialized in controlling spirit-possession, and ritually subordinating local demons and deities to the service of the Tantric adept.[4] The legacy of Tantrism in China –its symbols, techniques, and iconography– can be seen throughout the Daoist forms of Ritual Method that emerged during the Sòng, and in such monastic Buddhist rites as the Yújiā Yànkǒu 瑜伽焰口 for feeding hungry ghosts. But this Tantric legacy is nowhere more evident than in the liturgies and pantheons of the more Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters, like those still active in Táiwān, Pénghú, and Fújiàn.

The pioneering work of Kristofer Schipper, Michel Strikmann, Poul Andersen, and Edward Davis have helped to bring these developments into view, and established an approach to the Ritual Master tradition which emphasized the centrality of its interrelationships, historical and performative, with those of Daoist priests, Tantric ritualists, and Spirit-mediums.[5] This study

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[3] Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*; Hsieh Shu-wei 謝世維,《道密法圓: 道教與密教之文化研究》(臺北市： 新文豐, 民 107 [2018]); "Exorcism in Buddho-Daoist Context: A Study of Exorcism in the Method of Ucchuṣma and Luminous Agent Marshal Ma," in *Foundations of Daoist Ritual: A Berlin* Symposium, ed. Florian Reiter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 257-275.

[4] On Tantrism and spirit-possession in India see Fredrick M. Smith, *The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) and Geoffrey Samuel, *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic Religions to the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[5] A different approach is found in the works of Yè Míngshēng 葉明生, who instead argues for a much more linear conception of the Ritual Master tradition, in which an earlier form of "Lǘshān Fǎ" 閭山法, practiced by southeastern Wū 巫 (who are not identified as Spirit-mediums in Yè's work), and centered around the cult of Xǔ Xùn 許遜, and which later came into contact with Daoist and Tantric traditions, which then imparted secondary

seeks to build on this approach and the works of these scholars to expand examination of history and living practice beyond the domain of the ordained Daoist priesthood, and into the more conspicuously Tantric and Popular realm of the "Red Headed" 紅頭 (hóng-tóu/āng-taú) Ritual Master and the temple communities they serve. In turn, it is my hope that this rebalancing of vantage will help shed new light on the entire subject, including the Daoists' rites and altars, as well as the altars of the Common Religion, which stand at the centers of local society, and serve as the foundation of an integrated religious culture.

In southern Táiwān and much of the Mínnán littoral, this historically durable and locally adaptable tradition of the Ritual Master occupies the middle zone of an integrated ritual ecosystem, rooted in the nexus of temple and domestic altars that is the Popular or Common Religion –the primary and universal religious complex at the nodes, centers, and boundaries of traditional society. As such, the Minor Rite forms an important intermediating role –in historical change and in living practice– between these local altars of the Common Religion, their deities and Spirit-mediums on the one hand, and the classical Daoist church and their supra-local symbols on the other. Even in different regions without this same division of labor, where degrees of merger between Zhèngyī 正一 Daoist and Lǘshān 閭山 (-type) Ritual Masters prevail, or where monastic Buddhist and lay

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influences by accretion, thereby producing a second stage development he calls a Lǘshān Pài 閭山派. My examination of Yè's historical arguments and use of evidence forms a separate work which space does not permit me to include here. Nevertheless, the contrasts between Yè's work and those cited above have helped focus the arguments presented in the present study, in which I will consistently argue for a different approach in which Daoist and Tantric elements are not regarded as secondary accretions to an earlier "Wū-ist" tradition, but rather as elements in a synthesis engendered by long patterns of contact and exchange. Yè's historical arguments are primarily advanced in two articles: Yè Míngshēng 葉明生,「試論"瑜伽教"之衍變及其世俗化事像」,《佛教研究》, 第 8 期 (1999): 256-264; and「閭山派源流考探」,《道韻》, 第九輯 (2001): 150-184. Though my historical and other analyses often differ from those of Professor Yè, the present work would not be possible without his groundbreaking work, and (with John Lagerwey/劳格文) voluminous publication of Lǘshān liturgical manuscripts, which are consulted throughout this study.

Buddhistic ritual was and is performed for local gods,[6] symbols of the Ritual Method still form an intermediating zone between the celestial, cosmic, and supra-local symbols of Daoism (or Buddhism) on the one hand, and the terrestrial gods of local society on the other, as evidenced by the ubiquitous Tantric deity Varja Huìjī 穢跡金剛,[7] to marital rites performed at outer or "lower" altars as part of large-scale community ritual.[8]

This mediating role of the Ritual Master tradition, first articulated by Davis in particular, stands as a durable insight which I will show manifests in a number of analogous spatial and liturgical arrangements whereby the altar-spaces and liturgical structures of these traditions reflect one another and their respective positions within an integrated ritual cosmos. In this Daoist ritual cosmos, the terrestrial locality of the temple cult exists beneath a Daoist firmament of sidereal and

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[6] I use the term "Buddhistic" to refer to ritual traditions which display a self-conscious Buddhist orientation, but which are neither forms of monastic Buddhism, nor of mainline lay Buddhism, but rather amount to Buddhist-style forms of Ritual Method, or are otherwise ritual performers whose repertoire displays significant Daoist elements and/or conventions of the Common Religion. Use of the term "Buddhistic" further disambiguates such ritual traditions from Sectarian groups like those traditionally grouped under the label "Vegetarian Teaching" 齋教, which differ from both lay Buddhist groups and the ritual specialists I label Buddhistic. Exemplars of what I argue should be regarded as Buddhistic Ritual Method include the traditions studied by Tam Wai-lun, which he more generally calls "Popular Buddhism" 民間佛教 , as well as the Lìyuán Lűshān traditions of Shòuníng (Fújiàn), described represented in the *Lìyuán* volume published by Yè Míngshēng and John Lagerwey. To label such traditions as simply "Buddhist," or "lay Buddhist" would seriously mischaracterize the traditions in question, by creating the appearance of identification with monastic Buddhism and its affiliated lay Buddhist groups. Likewise, I believe the term "Popular Buddhism" is too broad a designation for the specific kinds of ritual specialists in question, as there are other kinds of non-monastic and syncretic Buddhism which might be considered "Popular," but which are not primarily ritual traditions, much less with clear Ritual Method content, such as rites for Spirit-soldiers and the Three Milk-maids 三奶. See Tam Wai-lun 譚偉倫「中國東南部醮儀之四種形態」, 《歷史人類學學刊》 第三期, 第二卷(2005 年 10 月): 131-156;「從粵北英德『喃嘸』醮儀看民間佛教」, 民俗曲藝 163（2009:3）:71-115; "Exorcism and the Pu'an Buddhist Ritual Specialists in Rural China," in *Foundations of Daoist Ritual: A Berlin* Symposium, ed. Florian Reiter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 137-149. On the Lìyuán Lűshān tradition see Yè Míngshēng 葉明生 and Láo Géwén 勞格文 (John Lagerwey),《福建省壽寧縣閭山梨園教科儀本彙編》, 中國傳統科儀本彙編, 冊 11 (臺北市: 新文豐出版股份有限公司, 民 96 [2007]).

[7] See the important analysis of Buddhist ritual in the Sòng (and Míng) by Daniel B.Stevenson, "Buddhist Ritual in the Song," in *Modern Chinese Religion I: Song-Liao-Jin-Yuan (960-1368AD) Volume 1*, ed. John Lagerwey and Pierre Marsone (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 328-448, esp. 413-430.

[8] See Tam Wai-lun, "Exorcism and the Pu'an Buddhist Ritual Specialists in Rural China," 77-79.

cosmic symbols which are consistently placed above and opposite to the deified dead and environmental spirits of the terrestrial locale, with the Prime Marshals, Spirit Officers, and Ancestral Masters of the Ritual Method positioned between these two symbolic domains. When viewed relative to either the temple-cult or the Daoist high gods, these Ritual Method spirits are stationed as an exorcistic vanguard at the leading edge of ritual performance, and a defensive perimeter around both local temples and the high cosmic powers of the Daoist pantheon.

This integrated ritual ecosystem of the Mínnán/Taiwanese region has been formed around the historical and ritual oppositions obtaining between Spirit-mediums, who incarnate the immanent gods of the Common Religion, and the Daoist priests of the classical Zhèngyī 正一 and Língbǎo 靈寶 traditions.

In the view of ancient Daoist apocalypticism, the social prevalence of these cults to former human beings and their mediums were both cause and effect of increasing cosmic disorder and political chaos. As such, early Daoism was in large part a reform movement which sought to supplant what Daoists considered to be the demonic cults and licentious sacrifices of Spirit-mediums, whose religion of the deified dead, then as now, formed the primary religious phenomenon at the center of society. But over the first millennium of Daoism's existence, as Daoism shifted from its origins as a separate religious community and came to occupy a place in society at large, Daoists began to assimilate these local gods into the lower ranks of the Daoist cosmic administration, a pattern which appears to have begun early in the medieval period.[9] As

[9] For these aspects of early Daoism and local cults, see Peter Nickerson, *Taoism, Death, and Bureaucracy in Early Medieval China*, PhD Thesis (University of California at Berkeley, 1996).
and "The Great Petition for Sepulchral Plaints," in *Early Daoist Scriptures*, ed. Stephen R. Bokencamp (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997)230-274.

Peter Nickerson has shown, by the Táng, Daoists were performing ritual for clients whose problems had been first diagnosed by Spirit-mediums, and then referred to the Daoists for ritual amelioration.[10] Following the profound energization of local cults from the late Táng onward, sparked by demographic and economic developments of the era, these patterns of polemic opposition and synthetic assimilation among mediumistic and priestly forms of religion likewise intensified, and laid the foundations for the integrated religious culture of the late imperial and modern periods, in which former adversaries –Spirit-mediums and Daoist priests– came to share respective niches within an overall religious system based in the temples of local gods and their mediums.[11]

As Davis has argued, the ritual and social alignment among these historically polarized strata of the religious culture was directly facilitated by and embodied in the formation of the Ritual Master tradition, whereby formerly autonomous Spirit-mediums and their fierce local gods were brought under degrees of priestly control and coordination. As I will argue throughout this study, these patterns of historical opposition and negotiated integration are inscribed within the symbols and language of Ritual Method liturgical texts, and in the respective altar-spaces of the religious

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[10] Peter Nickerson, "Shamans, Diviners, and Taoists: Conflict and Assimilation in Medieval Chinese Ritual Practice (c. A.D. 100-1000)," *Taoist Resources* 5.1 (1994): 41-66.

[11] On the development of the modern (post-Sòng) Jiào, and connections with Daoism's relationship with local cults, Andersen writes: "This special function of Taoist liturgy within the local cults of the common religion did not exist before the Song dynasty. In fact, as is well known, the Taoist religion that emerged toward the end of the second century CE defined itself at the outset in sharp contradistinction to the "excessive cults" (yinsi) and "bloody sacrifices" (xueshi 血食) of the common religion, which it viewed as the counterproductive responses of the people to extortion by demonic and false spirits... [While as to the emergence of an independent Jiào rite in conjunction with what had been known as a Zhāi 齋] it is clearly the all-inclusive compensation of the [subordinate] spirits that assisted the priest in performing his tasks that constituted the rationale for adding a jiao at the end of a zhai service... A special reason for this development was the growing importance in this period of a host of new martial spirits derived from the emerging traditions of exorcism, spirits who were invited as special protectors of the sacred area in a newly-designed ritual called Announcement (fabiao), performed at the very outset of the program." Poul Andersen, "Jiao 醮," EOT 543.

system. These relationships are in turn mirrored in the structural arrangements of community temples in Táinán and elsewhere.

As a manifestation of what I call the Tantric-Popular domain of the Ritual Method movement, the "Minor Rite" (法仔 ho̍at-à/小法 xiǎo fǎ), as it is known across the region, is a form of lay priesthood and its performance tradition oriented toward mastering and managing the spirits, spirit-armies, and Spirit-mediums of the local Common Religion, the bedrock stratum of the religious culture. The Common Religion is expressed in cultic altars, both temple and domestic, which are primarily dedicated to deified human beings and environmental spirits of place, as well as deities adapted from Buddhism and Daoism, and reinterpreted into a Popular context beyond clerical control. These highly immanent and personal gods of the Common Religion incarnate directly through Spirit-mediums, and also transmit instruction by means of spirit-writing, as well as forms of divination practiced by specialists and ordinary worshippers alike.

While at the broadest level, the development of Ritual Method traditions arose from priestly confrontation and collaboration with the historically energized local cults of the late Táng, Five Dynasties, and Sòng periods, at the more immediate level of religious practice, this confrontation and accommodation was in no small part driven by the perceived need to better manage and restrain the Spirit-mediums who directly embodied the potent gods enshrined in local temples. The Ritual Master not only facilitates trance-performance and interprets the ambiguous speech or writing of the medium, in many cases they also serve to actively restrain the potent immanence of these living gods and their mediums, whose words wield enormous influence over the lives and resources of temple communities. As Spirit-mediums can and do place demands on temples and individuals, the Ritual Master is, by their status and charisma, the figure most able to

place a check upon the will of the god-medium, and during possession-trance performances, as the god dictates ritual actions to be undertaken by individuals or the temple, in my experience, the Ritual Master will often negotiate with the deity to arrive at solutions more agreeable and less onerous to those involved, even if the Spirit-medium, in the give and take of their negotiated positions, does not always yield to the Ritual Master.

Hence as a master of spirits, in history and living practice, the primary objects of the Ritual Master's powers are the gods enshrined in local temples, followed by the pathogenic entities in the environment held responsible for disease. Daoists historically considered temple deities, the demonic dead, and predatory environmental spirits as largely one and the same, and regarded them and their Spirit-mediums as principle sources of disease and affliction. As a development of this conflicted relationship between Daoism and local cults, Ritual Method texts of all periods continue to depict temple deities as potential adversaries responsible for disease and misfortune, alongside spirits of the dead and the environment, who only differ from temple deities in their cultic status, but not in their basic natures. Thus, forms of ritual healing inevitably involve ritual mastery over the same kinds of spirits as those enshrined in temples, and manifest through Spirit-mediums. As a master of such spirits, the Ritual Master's role extends beyond healing and related rites to liturgical control over the cultic structures within which mediums and their gods are brought to life.

The Ritual Master wields a performative technology that can both manage the cultic worship of potent local deities, and deploy these deities, together with their spirit-armies, to heal bodies and protect the community from a hostile environment, in which different classes of spirits and the unhallowed dead cause all manner of misfortune, drought, disease, and epidemic. This

enchanted world is fraught with violence, and in the Common Religion and Ritual Method traditions, this violent spiritual world is expressed through an exorcistic paradigm that de Groot called "the War against Spectres."[12]

In its broadest outlines, this military construction of religious power has figured prominently in the religious culture since at least the late Hàn and medieval period, and forms a major dimension shaping the paradoxical relationships of opposition, confrontation, and resonance between early Daoism and the medieval Common Religion. First, early Daoists explicitly envisioned their new dispensation as a religious reform movement meant to rectify cosmic and social disorder embodied in the popular deification of "defeated armies, dead generals, and dead soldiers of routed armies"敗軍死將亂軍死兵.[13] The new "Pure Covenant" 清約 of early Celestial Master Daoism sought to correct this disorder through bureaucratic regulation of the spirit-world. In terms of religious practice, this involved a paperwork-intensive regime of confessional morality, and the substitution of symbolic items and written documents for the "bloody sacrifice" of popular worship.

But in addition to these definitively Daoist techniques of ritual bureaucratization, early Daoists also adopted a parallel military strategy in which they assembled celestial armies of their own to combat the deified dead plaguing humanity in "lower antiquity" 下古. This medieval religious arms race is most fully articulated in the *Tàishàng Dòngyuán Shénzhōu Jīng* 太上洞淵神咒經, a text of central importance to questions of medieval Daoism's relationship with local cults,

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[12] See J.J.M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China:Its Ancient Forms, Evolution, History and Present Aspect. Manners, Cusoms and Social Institutions Connected Therewith, Volume VI, Book II, On the Soul and Ancestral Worship*, "Part IV, The War against Spectres," (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1910), 6:929-1185.
[13] The famous phrase from the opening of *Lù Xiānshēng Dàomén Kē Lüè* 陸先生道門科略, ZHDZ 8:556.

and which offers some of the earliest evidence for Daoists converting these demonic spirits to service of the Dao.[14] But this military symbolism also appears front and center in the Zhèngyī system of initiatory registers 籙, in which adepts were progressively invested with an increasing number of spirit-generals 將軍, together with ranked their armies of soldiers and bailiffs, that offered spiritual protection and exorcistic healing power over pathogenic demons and spirits of the dead.[15]

Nevertheless, a military construction of religious power and symbolism only grew over the centuries, and became fully articulated in the premises and methods of the Ritual Method synthesis. In the liturgical systems of Ritual Masters, be they Daoist or more Tantric-Popular in nature, ritual objectives from healing and protection to alleviation of drought and maintenance of the temple precinct are all explicitly constructed in terms of military operations, in which subordinate spirit-generals and spirit-soldiers apply coercive spiritual violence on the bodies of spiritual entities. While this metaphor of violent control underpins the entire Ritual Method paradigm, such control ultimately depends upon what ritual texts consistently emphasize as the embodied nature of

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[14] See for example *Tàishàng Dòngyuán Shénzhōu Jīng* j.1 (誓魔品), where the Dao speaking thought mediumistic revelation enumerates armies of ghosts and demons which "since the xīn-sì and rén-wǔ years have been released in torrents, with demon-kings spreading poison, to poison and make ill the living people" 道言:自辛巳壬午年鬼兵縱洟魔王行毒毒病生民. To combat this demonic onslaught, the Dao has dispatched vast numbers of "imperial officers" 禁官 and other "men" 人 headed by various celestial divinities who "on behalf of Tài Shàng [the deified Lǎozi] imperially authorize demon kings. Demon kings all submit, and each one dispatches their demon sons as strong knights to patrol the kingdom's realm and protect the people of the Middle Kingdom, [the demon-sons] fearful that Tài Shàng will kill them." 道言:自辛巳壬午年鬼兵縱洟.魔王行毒,毒病生民.[... 玄女麻姑王妃三千六萬人悉同來], 為太上勑魔王, 魔王悉伏.各各遣魔子力士, 巡行國界, 擁護國中之人,恐太上誅之.ZHDZ 30:2-3. The term "powerful knight" 力士 appears often in such texts as *Chìsòngzi Zhāngli* 赤松子章曆, where the term also appears largely to refer to subordinated demons acting in the service of the Daoist. However, these early subordinates appear to be symbolic entities rather than spirits with an independent cultic existence and their own Spirit-mediums.

[15] For an overview of these registers of spirit-generals see Gil Raz, *The Emergence of Daoism* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 103; and Terry Kleeman, *The Celestial Masters: History and Ritual in Early Daoist Communities.* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, Harvard University Asia Center: 2016).

spiritual beings, who are threatened with beheading, binding in fetters and the cangue, or death by slicing, among countless other gruesome forms of violence. Conversely, the embodied nature of spirits is positively affirmed through food offerings, and further materialized in the parallels formed between the gods' anthropomorphic spirit-images and the human Spirit-mediums through which they manifest. Here too, Spirit-medium performance dramatizes this highly embodied military paradigm by featuring self-mortification with weapons amid a martial display of spiritual power, in which the possessed medium lightly but dramatically wounds their own body so as to shed the purifying blood of the god, and strike terror into spirits.

Where the classical Daoist tradition has made the written sign and written text its primary symbols and main mode of ritual action (through the transmission of written memorials), in the Common Religion and Ritual Method traditions, it is the body which serves as the primary symbol and operative paradigm for ritual action. The meanings and methods of the religious system are frequently encoded and enacted through spatial relationships and spiritual transfers among bodies –symbolic and human– which are joined in ritual practice through the visible and tactile continuum of embodiment formed among spirit-images, Spirit-mediums, human worshippers, and substitute bodies used in many ritual procedures. In the liturgical systems which execute these ritual transfers, the ritual texts, spirit-images, and Spirit-mediums all emphasize the bodily forms of these spirits and deities, with ritual texts and performative gestures vividly depicting how the spirits which cause disease and misfortune are compelled to comply with the commands of the Ritual Master.

While the military dimension of Ritual Method stands as one of its most definitive characteristics, there is also an important legalistic dimension, explored by Davis in detail, and which is embodied in the term "Ritual Officer" 法官 –a common term for "judge" in Chinese, and

which came to designate this new form of ritual expert in the 10th C. This major legalistic aspect is further reflected in the most universal and frequently repeated ritual gesture of the priestly Ritual Officer: the banging of the ritual gavel on the altar, which in most Taiwanese traditions serves to open ritual time, and to emphasize the Ritual Master's commands. This role of the priest as Ritual Officer takes as its operative metaphor the local yámen office (as opposed to the metaphors of imperial court ritual employed by Daoist priests), and by positioning the priest as the presiding magistrate, this political and juridical metaphor functions as yet another technique serving to identify the Ritual Master with the Ancestral Master or other deities enshrined on the altar, and who thus occupy the same central and elevated position of the magistrate in his yámen.

And yet within this judicial construction of priestly authority and ritual procedure, again it is through an imaginary of physical compulsion over the bodies of spirits whereby this judicial power is effected, a theme prominently foregrounded by a set of divinized instruments of restraint: Fetters 捉, Bind 縛, Cangue 枷 and Lock 鎖(called the "Four Grand Generals" 四大將 in the Minor Rite invocations) as some of the most universal symbols in the entire Ritual Method movement, found (with "Torture" 拷 often substituted for "Lock") in texts of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ and canonical Ritual Method compendia. These four deified instruments of physical restraint occupied such a prominent place in healing and other ritual that by the late imperial period they would be featured throughout the Minor Rite invocations, and included in the Mínnán-region pantheon of the Thirty-six Official Generals 三十六官將. Hence, it is this paradigm of embodiment and violent bodily compulsion which underpins the entire construction of ritual power and ritual action in traditions of the Ritual Method movement, a theme which the invocations themselves continuously emphasize.

In the Mínnán littoral, the prevailing expression of Tantric-Popular Ritual Method is universally referred to as the Minor Rite, by practitioners and members of society at large. As its name implies, the Minor Rite is a tradition embedded in a particular context, shaped by its formative contrasts with the Grand Rite 靈寶大法 of the ordained Zhèngyī 正一 and Língbǎo 靈寶 Daoist priesthoods, whose elite and intensively textual tradition of celestial, sidereal, and transcendent deities –divinities untouched by death and organized into a cosmic administration– form the symbolic firmament and ritual apex of the integrated religious nexus of the post-Sòng period, in which the terrestrial cults of the Shè Huì 社會 gradually came to be joined beneath a Daoist Heaven.

The integration among these formerly opposed ritual domains is so extensive that members of society commonly to refer to the entire complex as Daoism 道教 (Dào Jiào). Thus even where the term "Religion of Ritual" 法教 (Fǎ Jiào) has entered parlance, largely via contemporary Chinese-language scholarship, practitioners themselves still generally consider the Minor Rite to be a form of Daoism, which in fact the context-dependent term "Minor Rite" implicitly suggests. While we can see how the prevailing synthesis clearly preserves the oppositions between local gods and Daoist divinities as fundamental, it is arguably the case that in much of traditional southeastern China, and certainly in the regions under primary examination here, both the Common Religion and those forms of the Ritual Master tradition I describe as Popular-Tantric in nature can be described as Dao*ist* , which is to say, deeply informed by and fundamentally oriented toward the symbols and rituals of classical Daoism.

Hence while we should distinguish Daoism proper –the ordained Daoist priesthood and its liturgical systems– from the deified human beings, gods of place, and environmental spirits

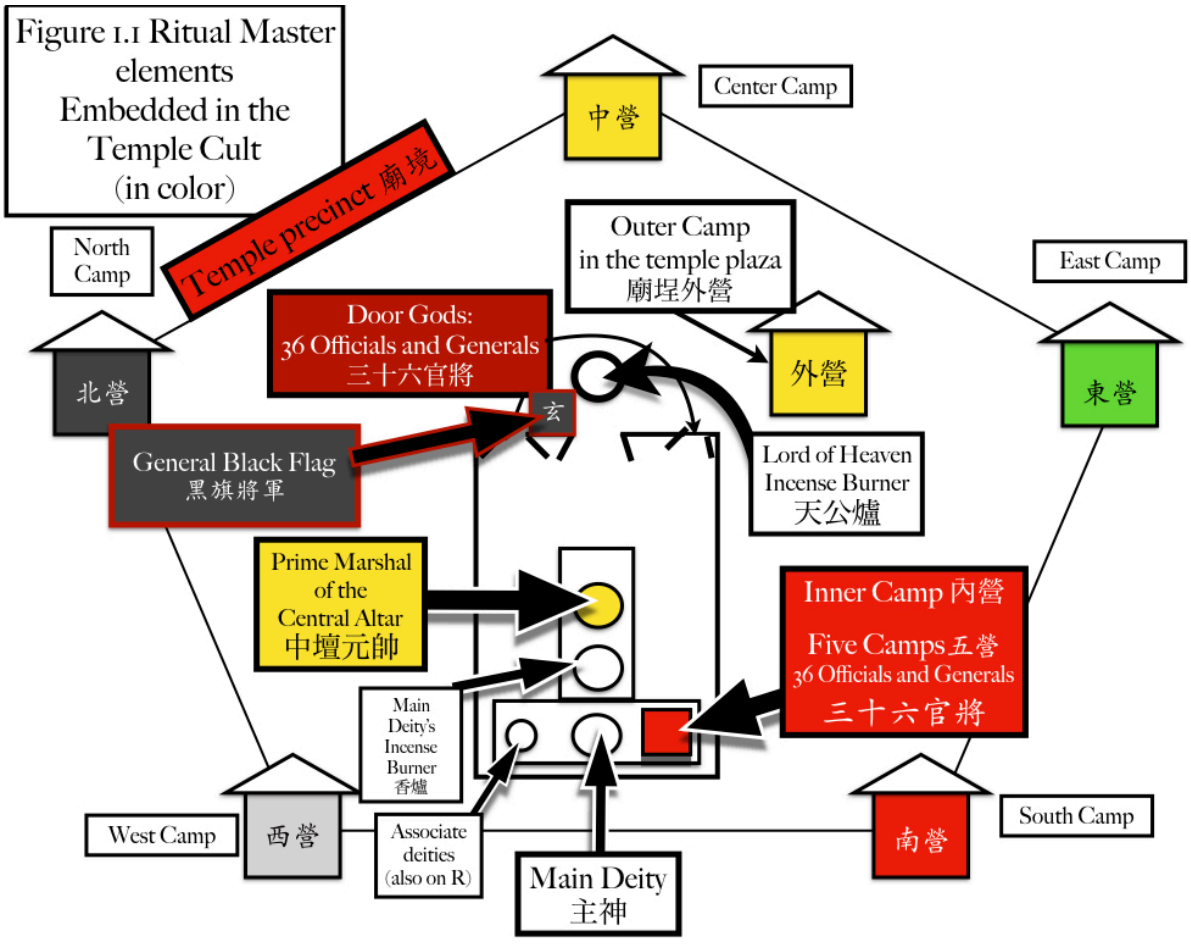
enshrined in the networked altars of the Common Religion, ordinary members of Taiwanese society and researchers alike would be justified in labeling the entire nexus as Dao*ist*, given the extent to which the gods and altars of the Common Religion have, since the Sòng if not earlier, been progressively (if unevenly) organized within what Kristofer Schipper first identified as a "Daoist liturgical framework," whose development, Schipper argued, paralleled the rise of market-town hierarchies in southeastern China, and the "emancipation of local cults" through official recognition.

As Davis has subsequently argued, the development of this Daoist ritual framework was both enabled by and embodied in the formation of the Ritual Master tradition (or, Ritual Method movement), as the emergent Ritual Master, both lay (Tantric-Popular) and Daoist served to subordinate local spirits and Spirit-mediums to degrees of priestly control, and thence to the higher-order, supra-local, and politically centralizing symbolism of literate priestly traditions. In the following pages, the nature and structure of this Daoist ritual framework as it manifests in southern Táiwān will be presented in more concrete detail than previous studies have succeeded in demonstrating. In its analogous liturgical, spatial, and performative dimensions, the structure and nature of this Daoist ritual framework clearly reflects this distinctively central and mediating role of the Ritual Method, be it in either Daoist or Tantric-Popular streams.

Importantly, the tremendous influence of classical Daoism on local cults is, in the regions under primary discussion here, largely confined to the broader symbolic orientation of local temples and their gods. Aside from the Jiào per se, such orientation is primarily visible in how these deities and their temples are legitimized by the authority of the Jade Emperor, who, in his own temples is clearly presented as a Daoist divinity seated beneath the Three Pure Ones 三清, and

associated with Celestial Master Zhāng 張天師, together with other symbols of the Daoist altar. However, Daoism has had relatively little if any impact on the actual form of the temple cult itself. Instead, it is the Ritual Method in its more Tantric-Popular mode which has directly influenced basic elements of the temple cult in the greater Taiwanese and Mínnán regions.

In its practice and transmission, the modern Minor Rite is primarily rooted in local temples of the Common Religion, a condition which must have considerable historic depth, as major symbols of the Tantric-Popular Minor Rite have become enshrined elements integral to the structure of the temple cult itself, including its territorial precincts, while specifically Ritual Method or Minor Rite ceremony is widely regarded as mandatory for the consecration of temples



and the maintenance of the temple's territorial precinct. In the prevailing arrangement found in the

greater Taiwanese region, the generals of the Five Camps 五營 which guard the four quarters and center of the temple precinct are none other than deified Sòng-era Tantric-Daoist Ritual Masters (the "Four Saints" 四聖[16] or "Lords-of-the-Rite" 法主公 Zhāng 張, Xiāo 蕭, Liú 劉, and Lián 連, and the Tantric deity Lǐ Nuózhà 李哪吒 (whose position as the guardian of the Central Camp – and the Central Altar– will be explored later in this study).

The integration of these Tantric-Popular symbols into temple cults of the Mínnán-region point to important patterns in the history of Chinese religion. First, following the work of Tanaka Issei, Kenneth Dean, and Guo Qitao,[17] I believe we should see the pronounced development of local cults from the late Táng onward as a primarily arising from an historic "transformation of the Shè" 社, or local Community Earth God, in which the contours of this transformation form a long wave with two crests, the first peaking in the Sòng, and then, stimulated by early Míng ritual reforms and subsequent economic recovery, cresting again in the mid-to-late Míng. But in contrast to arguments made by Valerie Hansen in her study of popular cults in the Sòng, *Changing Gods in Medieval China,*[18] and debated in important reviews of her book,[19] evidence from fieldwork, together with the kinds of liturgical texts examined in this study reveal that local cults of the Common Religion cannot be adequately understood apart from the roles of ritual experts, and that

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[16] Not to be confused with the Daoist Ritual Method pantheon of the Four Saints of the North Pole 北極四聖, which will be discussed below.

[17] Tanaka Issei 田仲一成. 《中國祭祀演劇研究》(東京：東京大學東洋文化研究所), 1981; Chinese translation: 《中國祭祀演劇研究》, 布和, 譯 (北京：北京大學出版社, 2007; Kenneth Dean, "Transformations of the She 社 (Altars of the Soil) in Fujian," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, Vol. 10, (1998)): 19-75; Guo Qitao, *Exorcism and Money: The Symbolic World of the Five Fury Spirits in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2003).

[18] Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China: 1127-1276* (Princeton University Press, 1990).

[19] Richard von Glahn, "Review: *Changing Gods in Medieval China:1127-1276*, by Valerie Hansen," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Dec., 1993): 616-642; Barend ter Haar, "Review: Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China: 1127-1276*," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, Vol. 82, Fasc. 1/3 (1996): 184-194.

Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters serve as the primary ritual experts of the Common Religion. While ordinary people may pray and consult methods of divination on their own, overwhelmingly, the temple-cult itself must be established and maintained through rites which require ritual experts. More effective rites of healing and disaster aversion likewise involve experts, whose powers are universally acknowledged as superior to those of ordinary supplicants. The gods themselves incarnate through Spirit-mediums, and as such deity-cults can hardly be separated from the performers who embody the gods, and thereby aid their worshippers. Thus, while Hansen sought to detach local cults from their varying connections with the Daoist and Buddhist clergy, these are not the only –nor the primary– ritual experts involved.

The fact that major elements of Tantric-Popular Ritual Method have become integrated into the structure of the Mínnán-region temple-cult strongly suggests that Ritual Masters of this more Tantric-Popular mode have consistently played a fundamental role in the rites whereby the temple cult is maintained and reproduced, as rites and symbols of the Tantric-Popular Ritual Method have become widely enshrined on temple altars, precincts, and many temple doors and walls as well, while in the Mínnán littoral at least, the main rites essential to the establishment and protective renewal of the temple cult are quintessentially Red Headed Ritual Master ceremonies. Moreover, these temple-oriented rites then create a cultic framework for the client-oriented, healing and therapeutic ritual formerly identified as the primary domain of the Ritual Master's "Minor Rites" 小法事.

These two realms of healing ritual and temple ritual are inseparably linked, with the latter providing the general framework which renders healing ritual efficacious and meaningful. There is a direct parallel of nested contexts and mutual references formed among temple rites – from

people's daily worship to the annual and periodic rites for maintenance and reproduction of the temple-cult on the one hand, and rites of healing, exorcism, protection, and prophylactic blessing, performed for individuals, families, and temple communities as a whole, on the other. Hence in this study I will discuss the rituals of the Minor Rite and the Daoist "Grand Rite" in a three-fold typology: 1) rites whereby the temple (or altar) cult is maintained or renewed, 2) rites whereby the temple cult and its elements are reproduced or established, and 3) personal, or people-oriented rites which enact transformations and transfers over individuals and family groups.

This typology helps bring the basic structures and procedures of the religious complex into focus, and is quite different from the usual distinctions made between rites for the temple community on the one hand, and individual "minor rites" on the other. The problem with this more typical categorization of ritual becomes immediately apparent when we recall that essentially all ceremonies for the reproduction and maintenance of the altar-cult can be performed for domestic altars as well as temples, while people-oriented "minor rites" are often performed for entire temple communities as a whole, especially at the Lunar New Year, and on gods' birthdays, and form major items in the temple community's liturgical calendar.

Thus, to foreground the more specific natures and purposes of rituals in practice, and better illuminate the ritual life of the temple cult itself, I will speak of rites within this three-fold typology and distinguish between rites which primarily serve to establish or reproduce cultic elements, rites which primarily maintain the altar cult, and rites which focus these cultic elements onto people in order to enact transformations. As an analytic devise, this typology seeks to conform as closely as possible with the patterns of ritual practice, but is not meant to be absolute, as some rites, like the Daoist Jiào in particular, straddle the domains of cultic renewal and reproduction,

while also including people-oriented elements as well. The exorcistic (and more Ritual Method-oriented) Royal Jiào 王醮 in particular, arguably the largest of religious festivals held in Táiwān, functions not only as a rite of maintenance-by-renewal for the extended community, but also as a personal rite of transformation on a grand, community-wide scale. During the Royal Jiào, the "minor rite" of transferring individual afflictions to a substitute body is directly paralleled and amplified by the sacrificial "Royal Boat" 王船 into which the forces of epidemic –the greatest peacetime threat to the collective community– are transferred and sent away in a manner analogous to the ritual use and disposal of an individual's substitute body 替身.

During the Royal Jiào, Red-Headed (Tantric-Popular) Ritual Masters often perform such rites for community members who first circumambulate the boat holding their paper substitute bodies, and are then ritually purified by the Ritual Master while facing the boat, with their substitute bodies then burned with the boat itself. Hence in the example of the Royal Jiào we see an image of the overall pattern of ritual practice whereby larger community and temple rites establish a metaphor and framework of ritual transformation which is then extended to individual oriented rites.

Furthermore, this three-fold typological approach to ritual also helps explain how personal rites are experienced as meaningful and efficacious, a question posed by Peter Nickerson in his important study of the Minor Rite ceremony of "Attacking the Fortress."[20] Nickerson convincingly argues that the tactile media and bodily practices which actively involve the clients evoke an embodied and multi-sensory experience of the ritual process, thereby creating a sensorial

[20] Peter Nickerson, "Attacking the Fortress: Prolegomenon to the Study of Ritual Efficacy in Vernacular Daoism," in *Scriptures, Schools, and Forms of Practice in Daoism: a Berlin Symposium*, edited by Poul Andersen and Florian Reiter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 117-184.

perception of the ritual's efficacy. To these insights, I would add that rituals like Smiting the Fortress 打城 are also perceived as efficacious because they are sponsored, performed, and experienced within a web of references to other rituals –as well as previous performances of the same ritual– which continually assert and affirm the authoritative reality of the religion's premises. The successful and ongoing performance of temple-based rites –in which the subjects are all symbolic and therefore less subject to ritual failure– creates a powerful metaphor which asserts that other kinds of rites, which ultimately seek to enact transformations over non-symbolic entities like people's bodies, will likewise have at least the potential to be efficacious. This same metaphorical structure is repeated within every rite of personal transformation, in which a series of preliminary ritual steps create a rhythm of symbolic transformations which then culminate in a final act of transformation or transfer involving the body (or clothes) of the individual client and a substitute body or other medium.

Only within or in reference to a properly established and maintained cultic structure can individual rites of transformation and worship be successfully performed. These two domains of ritual are not separate concerns, somehow thrust together by contingency, but rather mutually engender one another. The temple exists to provide a properly sanctified space in which authorized ritual experts and "correct deities" 正神 can respond to individual prayers, and render spiritual services. Framing these rites in their context within a religious system reveals an essential and formal relationship between ongoing cycles of community rites with very broad objectives, and individual rites with immediate and specific aims. As the Royal Jiào succinctly illustrates, within this integrated ritual cosmos, the same ritual paradigm appropriate to the community and its broad, collective concerns can be scaled down to the specific and immediate aims of an individual, a family,

a factory, any social or spatial unit.

Any attempt to account for the Minor Rite and its texts cannot be meaningfully conducted in isolation from the overall religious ecosystems, past and present, in which these traditions took shape and function. And as Kenneth Dean's initial study of Daoist ritual in Fújiàn quickly discovered, the primary context in which Daoist priests and Ritual Masters operate is the field of public temples and domestic altars which most scholars are accustomed to calling "popular religion", and which I here, to emphasize its social universality, will follow others in calling it the Common Religion, but capitalized, and prefaced with the definite article, to acknowledge its definite and specific existence as *a religion* and not merely a vague collection of disparate practices.

As the Common Religion has often been characterized and even defined by its relative lack of texts, scriptures, and written theology,[21] the Minor Rite ritual texts challenge these stereotypes, and provide a rare and immediate vantage onto the imagination and performance of the late imperial Common Religion itself, while offering detailed testimony of the complex interactions among local cults, Daoism, and the forms Tantric ritual which shaped the Minor Rite tradition.

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[21] See Schipper, "The Written Memorial in Taoist Ceremonies," in *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, edited by Emily Martin and Arthur P. Wolf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974, pp. 309-324), and Catherine Bell, "Toward an Assessment of 'Popular Religion'", *History of Religions* Vol. 29 No.1 (Aug. 1989), pp.35-57. Bell references Seiwert (1985) as exemplifying the position that what he calls "folk religion" can be distinguished from "institutional religions" in that "folk religion is made up of those practices not based on a literary tradition. While there have been objections to using the 'absence of scriptures' to define the popular religious tradition, Seiwer's characterization is not without some validity in the Chinese case." (p.43) Importantly, the "objections" Bell here notes flow from Jordan and Overmyer's (1986) study of sectarian "flying phoenix" 飛鸞 organizations, whom the authors distinguish from local Popular Religion precisely by this domain of textual production. Bell writes, "Overmyer, for example, illustrates the important role of text production in differentiating the spirit-writing sect from both village religion and other middle-level popular religious institutions." (46). By "middle-level," the author is referring to unspecified groups which integrate "elite" and "folk" elements and therefore form a "middle-level" of culture. The two important points here are that 1) the authors found text production and the intensive use of texts in ritual to actively distinguish sectarian religion from the common Popular Religion, which pointedly lacks texts, and 2) that the better-studied sectarian traditions are institutionally and symbolically separate from the networked altars of the Daoist Popular Religion, and like Buddhist groups of different kinds tend to form autonomous subcultures.

The Minor Rite invocation texts represent a body of ritual and religious lore that is not simply *about* the Common Religion, written by elite sponsors, devotees, dramatists or observers; rather, the ritual texts transmitted and performed by practitioners of the Taiwanese Ritual Master tradition are among the only kinds of text native to the temple cults of the Common Religion – texts instrumental to the reproduction and operation of the religion itself, in which a more popular class of ritual experts have recorded details and principles of the religion and thus created a rare genre of written, performative texts in which the religion of the common people can, in its own voice, be heard singing for itself.

The Minor Rite ritual texts are virtually all magical songs, mostly in 7-character couplets, which use performative, illocutionary language of command to make deities and their subordinate pantheons manifest within the altar-space, take possession of Spirit-mediums, and perform spiritual actions in the ritual present. An indigenous theory of ritual efficacy is consistently put forward by the invocations themselves, where iconographic and intensely violent language constructs a ritual imaginary in which deities and spirits are portrayed as embodied beings; the gods and spirit-soldiers commanded by the Ritual Master in turn apply or threaten coercive violence and corporal discipline on the bodies of pathogenic spirits, thereby achieving ritual objectives of healing, purification, protection, and (formerly) weather control, among other aims.

The language of the texts also features frequent transitions to first-person voice which serve to further identify the Ritual Master with deified Ancestral Masters and other gods. These two linguistic techniques of iconographic depiction and first-person identification form major hallmarks of the Ritual Method movement as a whole, visible in every historical period and regional expression of these traditions. Moreover, the Minor Rite invocations emphatically assert

the authorized legitimacy of the deities being summoned as deriving directly, in most cases, from the Jade Emperor 玉皇, but occasionally from the deified Lǎozi, Tàishàng Lǎojūn 太上老君, and the Celestial Master. Only on the rarest occasions do these ritual texts link gods' legitimacy to the imperial state, which seldom appears in the ritual sources under examination in this study. Rather, while the invocations are intensely preoccupied with asserting the authorized legitimacy of the gods, they consistently trace these deities' legitimacy to the powers of the Daoist altar.

A temple's Minor Rite textual folio may contain between some dozens to nearly two hundred separate invocations, but in Táinán, any given performance uses about twenty or so, while in Pénghú only a handful may be sung during the most common rituals. Hence, invocations can be selected and placed in specific sequences that reflect each altar's temple pantheon –often with reference to precinct-alliance temples, and sometimes the specific purpose of a given ritual, with these flexible sequences framed within a relatively fixed structure of ritual grammar through which the altar is "opened," and sacred time set in motion. In certain rites, after establishing the altar-space there are further songs and formula which then use the same mode of ritual language-and-gesture to enact transfers and transformations over things, people, places and spirits. Thus, the texts primarily depict the action or doing of the religion, and in so doing offer a tremendous amount of detail that reveals much about the nature and history of the religion as a whole.

While the high Daoist Jiào 醮 or Offering cycle serves to organize the altars and symbols of the religion within a higher-order framework of spatial, social, and theological dimensions, in the networked altars and local precincts of the living Common Religion, from Pénghú to southern Táiwān, the Minor Rite of the Ritual Master is *the* primary ritual tradition responsible for maintaining and reproducing the altars, temples, and temple precincts that form the institutional

foundations of the religious system. Furthermore, rites in which individuals are directly administered to by a ritual performer: rites of healing, exorcism, purification, soul-recall, removal of astrological adversity, fortune-boosting, and prophylactic blessing, rites which are performed for individuals, families, whole temple communities and the public at large– the vast majority of such rites are performed by Ritual Masters and/or Spirit-mediums, while such rites themselves are proper to the Ritual Master tradition. Thus when Daoist priests perform these same ceremonies meant to enact transfers and transformations among people and places in particular–to consecrate new temples, and even to purify the Daoist Jiào altar– they employ their own slight adaptations of the Minor Rite texts, in which at most a brief and appropriately Daoist "head" (often featuring Pǔhuà Tiānzūn 普化天尊) has been tacked onto the Ritual Master liturgy, complete with its Tantric and local altar-pantheon. And in many such cases the Daoist priest will demonstrate that there has been a change of ritual mode by tying on the eponymous red headband that indicates his change of identity to that of the Red Headed Ritual Master.[22]

Hence a fundamental hallmark of the entire Ritual Method movement is its orientation toward the local gods and mediums of the Common Religion, an orientation not shared by classical Daoism, which is instead directed toward its own celestial bureaucracy of sidereal and cosmic divinities. In the greater Taiwanese region, the gods and temples of the Common Religion

[22] For example, in the Kāi-guāng 開光 rite for the animation of spirit-images, even when performed by a Daoist priest using an ostensibly Daoist liturgy , the Daoist must make use of the Ritual Master's horn, whose identity as a ritual tool of the Ritual Master is made obvious by the fact that the horn itself has a red cloth tied to it: the horn itself is Red Headed. Furthermore, the Daoists' animation ritual involves several versions of the classic Ritual Master phrase "may the Ancestral Master on My behalf...May the Root Master on My behalf...祖師為吾...本師為吾..." and requires the blood of a live rooster, which, like the use of other household items such as brooms, straw mats, and ducks as ritual implements likewise represents a domain of popular ritual categorically different from the elite, courtly ritual of classical Daoism.

are literally born from Red Headed, Tantric-Popular Ritual Master ceremony, even when performed by Daoist priests, who must employ the symbols and ritual mode of the Ritual Method to directly engage with the gods, mediums, temple buildings, and temple precinct guardians of the Common Religion.

As a historical synthesis, the Ritual Method also grew from symbols and practices of ancient Daoist exorcism, which had long formed a zone of contact between Daoists and local gods, and as I will show the symbols incorporated from early Daoist exorcism into Ritual Method, such as the figure of Tiānpéng 天蓬, and the agent of purification known as the Destroyer of Filth General Nine Phoenix 破穢九鳳將軍, together with later Ritual Method symbols these came to be placed in the lower or outer echelons of an expanding Daoist pantheon, as demonstrated in major southern Sòng texts like the *Wúshàng Huánglù Dàzhāi Lìchéng Yí* 無上黃籙大齋立成 (*Established Rite of the Supreme Great Retreat of the Yellow Register*), as well as the modern Língbǎo Invitation of the Spirits 請神 (啟白) liturgy. This insistent "lowness" of Ritual Method symbolism in the scheme of Daoist adaptation suggests a further factor as to why Zhèngyī Daoism was likewise designated as the "lowest" by the medieval Daoist church, as it was through this stratum of Zhèngyī exorcistic ritual that Daoists engaged the even more "lowly" and implicitly impure ghosts and deified dead of local temples.

Furthermore, though the editors of the Míng Daoist Canon expended enormous effort to compile and publish large compendia and practical manuals of Daoist-brand Ritual Method, complete with specific altar-pantheons, this vast trove of rites and their particular pantheon arrangements evidently never took root in society, though elements of their language and symbols have, directly or indirectly, been partially recycled into the late imperial texts of Daoist lineages,

Lűshān traditions in Fújiàn, and the Taiwanese Minor Rite invocations. However, in the synthesis of these liturgical elements, and in the culture-war turf-battle between Ritual Masters and Daoist priests, the Tantric-Popular domain has largely prevailed across much of southeastern China.

In examining the volume and priority given to producing and publishing the Míng Canon's Ritual Method compendia like the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 道法會元 (*Compendium of Daoist Ritual Method*) and *Fǎhǎi Yízhū* 法海遺珠 (*Lost Pearls from the Sea of Ritual Method*), and the practical manual *Tàishāng Sāndòng Shénzhōu* 太上三洞神咒(*Divine Invocations of the Supreme Three Caverns*), which my research shows was drawn from these two compendia, I believe the urgent production of these texts (and the long delay in printing the Míng Canon, possibly linked to the compilation of these Ritual Method collections) was driven at least in part by the perceived need to counter and compete with the proliferation of these more Tantric-Popular Ritual Master traditions, and to provide practical texts of Daoist-brand Ritual Method to the ritual marketplace. And yet, these rites have lapsed into oblivion, even if many symbols and phrases visible in these texts still appear throughout the modern Minor Rite, and the exorcistic perimeter of the Daoist Jiào.

As but one token of this Red Headed triumph in the Ritual Method marketplace, the Zhāngzhōu-based Língbǎo Daoist lineages of the greater Táinán region all employ fully Red-Headed liturgies, formula, and melodies when consecrating new temples and purifying the Jiào altar set up in a temple. Even the tradition of climbing the Sword Ladder 刀梯 as a public ordination rite for Daoist priests, which Chén Róngshèng 陳榮盛 (1928-2014) introduced into Língbǎo practice in the late 1940's, is taken straight from Red-Headed ceremony, and involves a fully Red-Headed opening sequence, performed by a Daoist priest complete with a red cloth tied

around his black Daoist's cap. Thus, even Táinán-area Daoist priests ascend to High Priesthood through the midwifery of Red-Headed ceremony. The historical triumph of this more Tantric-Popular stream of Ritual Method is visible across southeastern China, and nowhere more so than in the same Táinán region, where Daoists have preserved the liturgical integrity of the Língbǎo Jiào by restricting Ritual Method content in the Jiào to exorcistic preliminaries and more outward-facing sequences –thus forming a sharp contrast to the "hybridization" of Lűshān and Zhèngyī lineages which prevails in much of Fújiàn and elsewhere.

But while the Língbǎo Jiào liturgy displays a careful assignment of martial, Ritual Method symbolism to the exorcistic perimeter of the ritual cycle, as a rite performed on behalf of temple communities and their local gods, the Jiào altar itself has become spatially dominated by the Prime Marshals and Ancestral Masters of Daoist Ritual Method, deities necessary to the ritual interface between the high deathless divinities of the Dao and the deified dead of local society, which in the Jiào altar sit opposite the high Daoist gods, guarded on each side by these Prime Marshals and Daoist Ancestral Masters.[23] The historic and cultural oppositions among the mediumistic Common Religion and hierophantic Daoism are preserved in and negotiated through the structure of the Daoist Jiào altar, and in the relationships between "ordinary" temples and Lord of Heaven Temples 天公廟, which are broadly modeled on the Jiào altar. Mediating between these cultural strata are the symbols of the Ritual Method: Prime Marshals 元帥 and Spiritual Officers

[23] In his analysis of the Jiào altar, Poul Andersen (2009) identifies the Prime Marshals as "Guardians" and the figures of Xuántiān Shàngdì 玄天上帝 and Celestial Master Zhāng 張天師 as "Saints," by which he rightly emphasizes that these latter two are, in theory, deified human beings, and as such are categorically different from the other deities of the Daoist pantheon altar-space. As I will present in further detail below, I argue we should interpret these two figures as Ancestral Masters of exorcistic Daoist Ritual Method, and perhaps reflecting, if not directly embodying the paired Ancestral Master 祖師 and Root Master 本師, two symbols or positions which permeate Ritual Method formula. Poul Andersen, Ritual Scrolls of Chen Rongsheng of Tainan, Taiwan." Unpublished paper, 2009.

靈官 – local gods and disease demons who have become subordinated to the tradition of the Ritual Master by the Ancestral Masters with whom the Ritual Master identifies during ritual performance. If historically the cultural integration among local gods and Daoist ritual was facilitated by the development of the Ritual Method, then this history is inscribed in the very Jiào altar where Daoist ritual and mediumistic local cults reproduce their mutual integration.

Within the broad base of the religious system, though conceived and organized in tandem with the celestial symbols and classical ritual of the Daoist priesthood, temple religion in the greater Taiwanese region is primarily established, reproduced, and maintained through the rituals of the Minor Rite, and where ritual transformations are not simply performed (or semi-improvised without any liturgy) by a Spirit-medium alone, most rites wherein individuals are subject to ritual transformations are likewise proper to the Ritual Master tradition, or what I call the Tantric-Popular hemisphere of the Ritual Method movement. Except for a few orally-transmitted formula, all of these Red Headed, Ritual Master rites have a textual basis, and even the largely oral formula, like that for Gathering in Shock 收驚 (sh̄iew gyāh̄) have mostly been written down in varying forms. Thus in the textual and performative corpus of the Minor Rite we have a genre of liturgical sources and a repertoire of ritual performance which depict the bottom-up construction and operation of the regional Common Religion, written and performed within the vantage of the temple cult itself.

This study is an attempt to account for these Minor Rite invocation texts, in history and in their performative context, and to answer fundamental questions raised by these ritual traditions. How is it that we have these texts? Can we ascertain how and why they assumed their distinctive forms? What do the invocations and their performances tell us about the principles, practice, and history of the religion? What light do they cast on the relationships, historical and cultural, among

these competing and coexistent traditions? The texts and performances of the Minor Rite challenge us with these questions, while presenting an image of religious conflict and cultural synthesis from the Sòng and into the late imperial period.

In the study that follows I will attempt to answer these questions from different vantages afforded by different sources, but always in reference to the Minor Rite invocations. In chapter 1, I examine historical backgrounds of what I identify as the Ritual Method movement, and by primarily examining canonical Daoist sources, explore the histories of specific symbols and textual elements to trace developments of Daoist traditions of exorcism from medieval and Táng sources, and into the emergence of the Ritual Method synthesis Sòng. In tracing this history, I show that certain key symbols and textual practices characteristic of the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method originated from developments within Daoism. This textual history illustrates how the nature and development of the Ritual Master phenomenon must be seen as a movement encompassing both Daoist and Tantric-Popular hemispheres of practice, and that segregating the Ritual Master tradition into a category of "Fǎ Jiào" 法教 only obscures its formative histories and basic nature. I also trace the development of the Tantric-inspired technique I call "liturgical identification," a definitive feature of the Ritual Method synthesis, whereby the Ritual Master is ritually divinized, but in a way unlike that of the Spirit-medium. And finally, I show how the distinctive type of lyric invocation that became the basis of the Minor Rite genre also developed within the texts of Daoist Ritual Method and its precursors in ancient Daoist exorcism.

In chapter 2 I examine altar-spaces and core Minor Rite invocations to show how the symbols of the Daoist ritual cosmos, the Ritual Method, and the temple cult form an integrated system marked by variable frames of reference, and joined through historical synthesis. In

particular I explore a series of subordinate pantheons that occupy prominent positions in Taiwanese and Mínnán religion, in particular the 36 Official Generals and the Three Altars, and also take up the question of how The Third Prince Nézhà 哪吒三太子 became Prime Marshal of the Central Altar 中壇元帥.

In chapter 3 I examine the Minor Rite invocations themselves, and first identify an earlier, core group of invocations shared across the region, while further showing how other stanzas, mostly to temple deities, were composed using the same textual conventions that developed in texts of Daoist Ritual Method in the Sòng. The invocations raise a number of important topics, including a pantheon of exorcistic goddesses known as the Four Immortal Ladies 四仙姑, who are organized into the Female Five Camps 女五營, an important pantheon specializing in rites for women and childbirth, but which has escaped the notice of previous Western scholars. As the Minor Rite genre presents a great many invocations for goddesses, these in turn reveal a complex image of the divine feminine, in which echoes of an earlier era of potent, deified female ritual experts who came to be interpreted through late imperial concepts of feminine perfection. Finally, I re-examine Kristofer Schipper's thesis of "vernacular" Daoism and show that the Minor Rite invocations are not really written in vernacular Chinese (or vernacular Hokkien/Mínnán), nor performed in an exclusively "vernacular" pronunciation, and that they are not "short, epic ballads" either. I conclude by arguing that even while elements of Schipper's analysis remain insightful, his "vernacular" thesis lacks a genuine linguistic and literary basis, and that ultimately the "vernacular" is not a particularly salient metaphor for capturing the most important aspects of the tradition and its texts.

In the fourth chapter I explore gazetteer literature from late imperial Fújiàn and Táiwān,

together with the contributions of 20th C. Japanese ethnographers to argue that the terms Wū 巫 and Wū-xí 巫覡, which originally meant "Spirit-medium," underwent mitosis following the rise of the Ritual Method movement, and that Ritual Masters of the Tantric-Popular variety came to be included by indigenous authors –and Ritual Masters themselves– in the Wū category, while Daoists were consistently excluded from this category in middle-period and late imperial literature. I argue that this dual reference of the term Wū is not the result of authors simply lumping together a mixed bag of popular ritualists, but rather reflects the specific ways in which Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters worked closely with and often resembled Spirit-mediums.

These gazetteer sources present a rich historical portrait of Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums across Fújiàn and Táiwān, often providing remarkable detail which demonstrates the geographic and cultural ubiquity of Ritual Masters throughout the region. As the product of office-holding gentry, the local gazetteer genre represents a particular, often agenda-laden perspective on culture and society. Tropes are frequently repeated, pejorative biases are commonplace, and prescriptive rhetoric is often presented as descriptive of fact. However, in reading these sources for their information on religious customs, I seek to leverage these intrinsic biases in constructive ways. First, I have restricted my use of gazetteers to regions of Fújiàn and Táiwān, areas for which we have substantial numbers of Ritual Master liturgical texts, as well as other fieldwork and historical studies. In many cases, these other forms of evidence enable degrees of cross-reference, and can often affirm the accuracy of certain gazetteer depictions. Where tropes are repeated, the appearance of new or different information often reveals that the authors were adding observations, and not simply copying older texts. Moreover, in many instances, self-consciously orthodox literati confess that the Confucian values they championed were far from universally accepted, even

among the elite. Together with the often substantial documentation of ostensibly unorthodox ritual practices given in these texts, we can see that the ideological commitments of literati authors did not completely suppress or distort the popular cultural practices they observed, and found too socially universal to ignore. Finally, the gazetteer depictions of religious culture evolved dramatically in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The enhanced resolution offered by many of these later gazetteers accords closely with what can be observed in modern fieldwork. Thus, as historical documents, by critically reading these sources, they yield remarkable testimony of religious customs in the late imperial period.

In examining this gazetteer literature, I also explore a development in religious practice whereby Sprit-mediums and spirit-possessed sedan-chairs began prescribing medicines, a phenomenon widely reported in Qīng and Republican gazetteers. By examining the contexts in which gazetteer authors discuss these and related developments, I show that the literati authors who composed these reports saw the practices of Wū as one of a series of prevailing customs which they saw as the antithesis to their own Neo-Confucian ritual program, but these same authors reveal that the rites promoted by ultra-orthodox Confucians were not widely adopted in society, including among the elite.

Finally, I turn to how identification of the Wū as Spirit-mediums, as championed by Davis, Andersen, and a handful of other scholars, has largely eluded many others, including most Chinese-language researchers, who instead, due to a range of methodological issues have tended to either regard the Wū in purely tautological terms, or have been influenced by translations from Western scholarship, most notably the concept of "shamanism," but also "magic," which employ the term Wū in ways which have obscured its indigenous referents. After examining attempts to identify the

Wū with shamanism, I advance an alternative analysis of Spirit-mediumship based on the more empirical notion that it is both a learned phenomenon, and a collective enterprise, two important points which are rendered invisible by the premises of the shamanic interpretation.

In a final chapter, I offer an overview of the religious world in and around Táinán, with particular emphasis on the place of Minor Rite and Daoist ritual traditions in the networked altars of the Common Religion. Such discussion necessarily involves taking up a series of basic issues with the scholarship and discourse of the Popular, or Common Religion itself. Here I advance an alternative framework for understanding the religious culture in general, as shaped by what I call a "spiritistic paradigm," in which the premises and practices of the religion are structured around the descent of spiritual beings into the human world. This contrasts with a shamanic paradigm (or "shamanic substrate"), in which the movement of human beings into the spirit-realm forms the dominant premise shaping religious practice. By acknowledging this spiritistic nature of the religious culture, and by refusing to conflate spirit-possession with shamanism, this approach not only brings the practices and ideology of the religious culture into clearer focus, it further serves to more clearly reveal those practices and phenomena which are arguably shamanic in nature, though none of these attenuated shamanic practices lead to a figure who can be meaningfully identified as a shaman. Rather, I suggest these arguably shamanic phenomena be regarded as constituting a "shamanic lane" within this spiritistic paradigm –one avenue of religious practice that has its place, but does not shape the overall premises of religious action.

In addition, I outline how the altar, and not the temple per se, forms the fundamental unit of religious practice, while offering a taxonomy of ritual based on the centrality of the altar-cult. In this approach, I identify three types or functions of ritual: those which primarily serve to establish

or reproduce cultic elements, rites to maintain the cultic viability of those elements, and person-oriented rites which serve to direct the sacred power of a viable altar-cult onto people in order to enact ritual transfers and transformations. In this way, temple and community-oriented rites on the one hand, and individual rites of healing and fortune-boosting on the other mutually imply and empower one another, and are thus intrinsically linked. Though space in this historically-oriented study does not permit inclusion of my analysis of the ritual repertoire and of ritual performance, to emphasize hitherto overlooked aspects of the local religious system, I offer an overview of the primary rituals concerned with temple precinct alliances in Táinán, a subject of tremendous importance to the religious culture, but which has largely escaped notice in previous Western-language writings about Daoism and traditional religion in Táiwān.

I also present an alternative taxonomy for understanding the different lineages and traditions of the Minor Rite in Táinán, in which I coin the terms "tradition-group" and "transmission-branch" to better depict the actual nature of Minor Rite practice and transmission, and thereby avoid the pitfalls of existing categories, in which researchers frequently use the same terms of either "lineage-group" 派(pài) or "lineage" 法脈 (fǎ mài) to label entirely different, or unrelated dimensions of practice and transmission. By building on the pioneering work of Wáng Zhāowén 王釗雯, who established the historic lineage-descent of Táinán-area Minor Rite traditions, I offer a brief overview of the Táinán-area Minor Rite in light of my taxonomy of tradition-groups and transmission-branches.[24]

[24] Wáng Zhāowén 王釗雯, 《臺南市廟宮小法團之研究》(碩士論文，國立臺南大學, 2003).

Chapter 1 The Ritual Method Movement

Introduction

Evidence from history, fieldwork, and the relevant scholarship argues that the historic movements variously labeled as "exorcistic Daoism," "therapeutic Daoism," and "Thunder ritual" 雷法, as well as ostensibly non-Daoist Ritual Master traditions connected with such symbols as Lǘshān 閭山, the Three Altars 三壇, the Three Milk-maids 三奶, and Yoga 瑜珈, among others– such traditions of the Ritual Master 法師 or Ritual Officer 法官 should be seen as fundamentally related in their broader historical roots, their symbolic repertoire, and ritual orientation. I believe we are not merely justified but compelled to recognize these diverse and interpenetrating traditions as manifestations of a broad but coherent phenomenon which I will call the Ritual Method movement.

The notion that all of these ritual traditions –from the tenth century Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ 天心正法 and Sòng-era Thunder rites to more popular streams of transmission under names like Lǘshān and Three Altars constitute expressions of a related phenomenon is not a radical proposition. Rather, it makes explicit what has largely remained implicit in both scholarship and indigenous terminology, namely the idea that there is a coherent though varied domain of ritual called fǎ 法, the ritual tradition of the Ritual Master or Ritual Officer, an adaptable meta-tradition transmitted by both a broad spectrum of more popular Ritual Masters and a range of historic Daoist lineages, for whom assimilation of Ritual Method symbolism and practice into a global Daoist synthesis formed a major stimulus to Daoist textual production in the Southern Sòng, Yuán, and Míng periods.

The term "Ritual Method" and the domain it indicates are taken from the indigenous designation fǎ 法, which in this context literally means "rite" or "method," and appears in the names of many if not most of these traditions, both Daoist and (strictly-speaking) non-Daoist, to mark and define these traditions not merely as a generic "ritual method," but as a particular ritual mode which was seen by practitioners, historically and now, as different from the primary ritual way of classical Daoism. This distinction is visible in many settings, including the instructive term "the Two Schools of Dào[ism] and Ritual [Method]" 道法二門 (dàofǎ èrmén) used in central and northern Táiwān to descriptively label the particular configuration of these two different ritual modes that prevails in those regions, in which the role and repertoire of the Ritual Master have been wedded to that of the Daoist priest, but in such a way as to preserve the distinction between the two ritual domains.

To account for both the coherence and variety of Ritual Method traditions, I propose to first recognize that these ritual forms constitute *a movement* – a broad but congruent historical phenomenon expressed in multiple streams; and further, to account for patterns of interpenetrating differentiation among various streams of Ritual Method, I propose to describe this movement as manifesting in two "hemispheres": one more fully "Daoist", and one I call "Tantric-Popular," which roughly corresponds to what Chinese-language scholars have, since Liú Zhīwàn, tended to label "Fǎ Jiào" 法教.[1] Though I argue that the Ritual Method movement in all its forms is a historic synthesis of Daoist, Tantric, and Popular elements, in the more expressly Daoist hemisphere of the movement, the Tantric and Popular symbols tend to be retooled or

[1] Liú Zhīwàn 劉枝萬, 「閭山教之收魂法」, 在於《中國民間信仰論集》, (臺北: 中央研究員民族學研究所, 民 63[1974]) : 207-378.

rebranded within a Daoist construction of authority, and are often given new, Daoist-brand identities, while in the Tantric-Popular hemisphere of Ritual Method, the Tantric deities, local gods, Tantric and Popular Ancestral Masters tend to predominate, and take precedence at the head of ritual systems that historically have been transmitted independently of Daoist lineages, though often in degrees of proximity or merger with them. Thus amid tremendously fluid exchange, symbols in many cases have tended to track with social formations, so that rites transmitted by ordained Daoist priests tend to display degrees of rebranding –sometimes minimal– which designate even purely local(ized) Tantric-Popular symbols as headed by Daoist symbols of authority. Likewise, in traditions whose prime symbols are proper to the Tantric-Popular domain, the relative prominence of these Tantric and Popular symbols still obtains even when clearly integrated into a Daoist ritual cosmos, in which the highest powers of Heaven are unambiguously Daoist, a situation witnessed Táiwān and much if not most of traditional southern China and its diasporic communities.

Two important concepts from previous scholarship help us to navigate the patterns of variation witnessed in Ritual Method traditions. First, the notion of "hybridity" that Schipper advanced as part of his "vernacular" thesis, which I will substantially challenge and revise in order to make the concept of "hybridity" in this context a more useful tool, by showing what is hybridized in such cases are not "vernacular" and "classical" forms of liturgical language, but instead symbols proper to classical Daoism on the one hand (such as high gods of the inner altar), and those of the Tantric-Popular hemisphere of Ritual Method on the other. The common proximity of symbols from the two hemispheres of Ritual Method –such as Zhēnwǔ 真武 and the deified Nāgārjuna, Lóngshù Wáng 龍樹王– do not, in my reckoning, in and of themselves constitute hybridity, but

rather indicate the fundamental nature of the Ritual Method as a synthesis among Daoist, Tantric, and Popular elements, in which a common ritual idiom and orientation renders symbolic elements highly fungible and subject to agglutination. The concept of hybridity becomes most useful when faced with Lűshān-type traditions that have become merged with the symbols and conventions of Zhèngyī Daoist liturgy, a pattern visible in much of southeastern China.

Secondly, Edward Davis' observation that different traditions of Ritual Masters "formed a fuzzy set" within a continuum drawn between the two poles of the Daoist priest and Spirit-medium. Depending on their varying social and ritual contexts, Davis finds that Ritual Masters tend to occupy positions closer to one end or another of this polar spectrum, and thereby more nearly resemble either Daoist priests or Spirit-mediums in their appearance and performative contexts.[2] Evidence from Táinán indicates how even the same liturgical traditions can be interpreted precisely along this axis, with some Ritual Masters indeed showing closer stylistic affinity and performative proximity with Spirit-mediums, while others, practicing the exact same traditions, perform in a style, manner, and dress closer to that of Daoist priests.

On a broader scale, different regional traditions likewise reflect this tendency. Most of the "upland" Lűshān traditions documented by Yè Míngshēng and John Lagerwey tend to more broadly resemble Daoist priests, while the traditions of the Mínnán littoral and its hinterlands, including the Minor Rite in Táiwān and Pénghú, tend to be far more oriented toward cooperation with Spirit-mediums, and are more directly integrated into the nexus of local temple cults. Yet even among the upland Fujianese traditions as described by Yè and Láo Géwén, the Wǔlíng Jiào 五靈教 on the one hand and the Wánglǎo Jiào 王姥教 on the other also respectively embody this

[2] Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, 54.

relative polarity among more Daoist-styled performance or a more "Wū" 巫 style orientation, as Yè terms it.[3] Hence a sensitivity to this polar axis running between the Daoist priest and Spirit-medium can help better depict traditions as found in the field, and tends to track with concrete performative arrangements among priests and mediums, patterns which urgently deserve greater attention from field researchers than is normally the case.

With assistance from these coordinate axes of a retooled notion of hybridity, and attention to Ritual Masters' relative positions within a continuum formed between Daoist priests and Spirit-mediums, it is my hope that an approach based on cognizance of a historic Ritual Method movement will facilitate more nuanced analysis of ritual traditions as found in the field and in texts, both liturgical and historical, and thereby help move scholarship beyond the many pitfalls created by existing categories, most notably the inarticulate binary of a monolithic and seldom-defined "Daoism" 道教 versus an opaque "Ritual School" 法教 (Fǎ Jiào), as well as Schipper's insightful but ultimately misleading metaphor of "vernacular Daoism."

Furthermore, in recent years numerous studies have raised the labels of "Thunder ritual" 雷法 (or "Thunder magic"), and "Thunder gods," under the implied premise that the traditions and symbols indicated by such nomenclature constitute an autonomous development in Daoism, and that such language suffices to meaningfully encapsulate the developments in question.[4] However,

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[3] See Yè, *Guāngjì Tán,* 46-52. As will be discussed in the chapter on the Literature of the Wū, Yè Míngshēng and most other Chinese-language scholars typically do not associate Wū 巫 with Spirit-mediums, but instead tend to assume them to be another kind of priest, whose traditions they (like Yè) often depict as separate from but somehow mixed with the Common Religion (which they term "Popular Belief" 民間信仰). As a result, virtually all such discussions of the Wū tend to lack clear (or any) parameters or a clearly defined referent.

[4] See for example Mark R.E. Meulenbeld, *Civilized Demons: Ming Thunder Gods from Ritual to Literature* (PhD Thesis, Princeton University, 2007), and *Demonic Warfare: Daoism, Territorial Networks, and the History of a Ming Novel* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015); Florian C. Reiter, *Basic Conditions of Taoist Thunder Magic* 道教雷法 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), and "Daoist Thunder Magic (Wulei

the diffusion of references to "Thunder ritual" throughout texts of Sòng-Yuán-Míng Daoism should make clear that such symbols are parts of a larger phenomenon, just as the Daoist Thunder Department 雷部 forms but one of several strategies for organizing assimilated demons and local deities into Daoist pantheons. Ultimately the issue at hand is not the specific development of Thunder gods per se, but the larger process of subordinating locally worshiped and dangerous deities into the Daoist ritual cosmos, a process which in Daoist bureaucratic terms also includes numerous other offices and departments, such as Bureaus of Epidemics, Fire, and Water, not to mention the first of such new Daoist offices, the North Pole Department of Exorcism 北極驅邪院. Thus despite the prevalence of thunder symbolism and indeed of the Thunder Department as a means of categorizing assimilated Prime Marshals and Spirit Officers, the phenomenon as a whole cannot so easily be reduced to or defined by Thunder ritual and Thunder gods, as these are symbols which play important roles in what is, ultimately, a broader movement whose nature and extent is camouflaged when but a part is taken to represent the whole. Hence I argue that symbols of the Thunder Department and Thunder ritual be seen as elements of a wider Ritual Method movement, characterized in part by the subordination of local gods and demons –including those of Indic origins– to the tradition and altar of the Ritual Officer.

In positing a Ritual Method movement, I am also arguing against views which imagine religious traditions to have discrete, singular origins, a linear descent through time which then in contact with other, similarly linear and discrete traditions undergo transformation by syncretism and admixture. Rather, the history of religions in general, and Chinese religions in particular all

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fa 五雷法), Some Aspects of its Schemes, Historical Position and Developments," in *Foundations of Daoist Ritual: A Berlin Symposium*, edited by Florian C. Reiter, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009).

testify that no so-called religion, religious movement or cultural mode arises from a single cause and a single, discrete origin, nor are these religious groups then characterized by monolithic and linear transmission over time. The evolution of religions, their transmission through branching streams, and the complex interactions among cultural strata, forming cultural positions variably eclectic or exclusive, all amount to something far more multivalent than what is implied by conventional notions of syncretism, which intrinsically posit the dilution or discoloration of some original essence through contact with formerly alien elements. In Chinese historiography, such concepts have helped shape a narrative of the "decline" of Buddhism and Daoism through a top-down decadence into "popularization."[5] The presumed "decline" of Daoism in particular, long held as dogma in Chinese-language scholarship, has in turn rendered invisible major historical patterns shaping Chinese religion and culture from the Sòng onward, none more so than the systemic integration among Daoism and local cults, a phenomenon for which one searches in vain in Chinese-language histories of Daoism and Popular Religion.[6]

Likewise, specific schools and lineage-groups 派 (pài) of both Daoism and the so-called "Fǎ Jiào" 法教, or what I call the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method, have in the same manner often been reified into discrete entities with singular origins and linear descent through time, and depicted as only later "mixing" with other such lineage-groups.[7] Among other pitfalls,

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[5] See for example Qīng Xītài 卿希泰, 《中國道教史》, 卷四（臺北：中華道教出版社, 1997）.

[6] For example, see Rén Jìyù 任繼愈, 《中國道教史》, 2 vols, (臺北市：桂冠, 1991). In this work, discussion of relations between Daoism and "Popular Religion" 民間宗教 are confined to issues involving Sectariansim; relations involving local cults are never raised.

[7] The *locus classicus* for this reification of Ritual Method lineage-groups is the work of Líu Zhīwàn 劉枝萬, who published a chart (1974:209) linking specific lineage-groups with both putative Ancestral Masters and specific locations, and this chart has in turn been reproduced in numerous later works (Dài et. al 2014:19). The notion that these lineage-groups constituted discrete entities which only later became "mixed" has been recently voiced by Lín Měiróng 林美容 in her tribute to the newly (2019) and posthumously published anthology of Lűshān ritual manuscripts edited by Líu, where after noting the distinct natures of each lineage-group Lín claims that

such linear conceptions of religious traditions tacitly reflect the practitioners' own agenda-laden constructions of their histories, in which fictive lineages (of Celestial Masters, Chán Masters, Ancestral Masters, and clan lineages) have been formulated and projected backwards onto the past as strategies to claim primacy and legitimacy. Though such claims of lineage decent and lineage-group identity form parts of the tradition to be analyzed, they cannot be taken at face value and allowed to structure scholarly interpretation of the broader tradition. The evidence of liturgical texts and fieldwork reveals that at no point in history have Chinese ritual lineages been discrete, autonomous, and linear entities, whose adherents remained cloistered within sectarian commitments like Protestant denominations. Though many Buddhist and Buddhistic groups have tended toward social segmentation, Daoist and Ritual Master sources reveal webs of mutual influence and degrees of eclecticism, visible throughout of every period and region, with such cross-fertilization long helping to stimulate innovation and adaptation.

In addition I am arguing against the impulse to grant the traditions of ostensibly non-Daoist Ritual Masters status as a wholly independent "religion" or "jiào" 教, despite the coherence formed among what I call the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method. Positing a separate "jiào" for such traditions merely obscures the actual phenomenon at hand, which extends to a range of fully Daoist formations, as well as others which claim to be "Buddhist" or even "Buddhist Daoists" 佛教道士, like those of Jiāngxī studied by Tam Wai-lun (2009), much of whose ritual repertoire is

"However, nowadays [different lineage-groups] cannot avoid mutual mixing and mutual inclusion [of each others' liturgical elements]" 但現今也不免互相參雜，互相涵蓋. (林美容，"一生懸命留遺著：劉枝萬先生新書《臺灣の法教》書後語"，http://think.folklore.tw/posts/4164) ret. 3/19. Evidence from the Sòng (Davis 2001) to liturgical materials from across Fújiàn and Táiwān contradict such a view of these traditions, and instead indicate tremendous fluidity of symbols and Ancestral Masters, and a pronounced agglutinizing tendency from early stages.

composed of Lűshān ceremonies for spirit-soldiers, and involves the Three Milk-maids 三奶, Madams Chén, Lín, and Lǐ 陳林李.[8] Furthermore, like most large-scale community ritual in southern China, regardless of ritual affiliation the rites tend to begin with a Daoist-style Announcement of the Memorial, and are thus fundamentally structured according to conventions of Daoist ritual.[9] Clearly, standard categories of "Buddhism", "Daoism", and a putative "Fǎ Jiào" 法教 or its equivalent cannot meaningfully come to terms with these complex traditions and their interrelations.

The erection of a separate "religion" of the Ritual Master also creates a series of unresolved oppositions with "Daoism," and further fragments the historical relationships formed among local cults and priestly traditions, thus inevitably forcing processes of symbolic and liturgical interchange back into the paradigm of "mixing" between discrete traditions. The structural and historical resonances across the entire Ritual Master phenomenon, encompassing forms both explicitly Daoist and otherwise, are simply too strong and consistent to justify a discrete category for ostensibly non-Daoist Ritual Master traditions. Instead, analysis and classification must account for the dynamic and ongoing patterns of exchange which engendered the Ritual Master movement, and have produced a remarkable variety of expressions which easily cross boundaries, however drawn, between "Daoism" and its alternatives.

Furthermore, as the integration of local cults into variously negotiated "liturgical frameworks" forms one of the most important trends in the history of Chinese religions, the central role which Ritual Method practice and symbolism have played in facilitating the symbiosis among

[8] Tam Wai-lun 2007:140-144. Also, Tam Wai-lun 2009:104;
[9] For examples of what I call "Buddhistic" specialists involving Daoist-style rites of sending-up memorials, see Tam Wai-lun 2005:134-5; Tam Wai-lun 2007:141, 2009:85-6, 95; Lagerwey 1994:314.

Daoism and local cults is immediately obscured if the tradition of the Ritual Master is encapsulated in its own separate category, and thence placed in a basket of separate traditions whose interactions and patterns of integration are again interpreted in terms of mere "mixing." Descriptiona of these relationships as simply involving "mixture" are incapable of grasping the prominent structural dimensions of this historic synthesis, in which definite relationships among local gods, Ritual Method guardians, and high cosmic gods obtain across traditions and regions, and give shape to the vertical integration among local and supra-local symbols.

Thus to account for this variety, the fluid exchange of symbols, the cultural consonance enabling such exchange, as well as the patterns of differentiation clearly visible in history and the field, I propose first to make the relatively obvious argument that the tradition of the Ritual Master or Ritual Officer constitutes a movement, one which is best depicted by the term most broadly associated with it: the *Fǎ* 法 or Ritual Method. And furthermore, to account for the patterns of interpenetrating differentiation that characterize this Ritual Method movement, I believe the metaphor of two "hemispheres" can somewhat capture the broader outlines encompassing these complex relations of mutual influence and relative differentiation.

The concept of a Ritual Method movement characterized by two hemispheres, one "Daoist" and one "Tantric-Popular", is an attempt to account for the evidence, historical and ethnographic, which reveals exchange to be at the root of the entire phenomenon. Furthermore, as a synthesis of Tantric, Daoist, and Popular traditions, the ritual systems of Ritual Method share a broadly common ritual lexicon and a kind of ritual template of altar-pantheons, lyric invocations, and liturgical sequences which are then capable of further syntactic flexibility. Moreover, these Ritual Method altar-pantheons demonstrate a bi-directional capacity for integration into larger religious

systems, and can be subordinated under Daoist hierarchies, as through the North Pole Department of Exorcism or a Lűshān yamen 衙門, or in temple-based contexts directly beneath the Jade Emperor, and thence the high cosmic gods of Daoism. But within the temple-cult these pantheons can also be subordinated below the main god of the temple, as with the cult of the Five Camps 五營 and the Thirty-six Official Generals 三十六官將, whose rites constitute a major proportion and definitive element of Ritual Master performance. This bi-directional capacity for both local and supra-local integration forms a major characteristic of the entire Ritual Method phenomenon. Together with the basic performative and symbolic premises of the Ritual Method, whereby the fierce, immanent gods and mediums of the Common Religion have, to some extent, been brought under degrees of priestly control, this adaptable capacity for variable integration, with its flexible template and symbolic lexicon are all important factors behind the stunning success of Ritual Method traditions in southern China and beyond.

Defining the Ritual Method Movement

In his major study of the "Tantric Movement" in India, Ronald Davidson proposes adoption of "polythetic" categories for classifying cultural and natural phenomena, in which "a *set* of variables that both meets tests of the evidence and fits the historical context" form the basis of category formation, and stresses that the "important contribution of polythetic category construction is that the presence or absence of a single variable does not defeat the inclusion of an item into the category."[10] With this polythetic approach Davidson offers a set of characteristics

[10] Ronald N. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 119, emphasis in original.

centered on the "sustaining metaphor" of ritualized kingship as definitive of Tantric religion,[11] thus indicating a coherent but varied domain of history in which certain features formerly held as essential to Tantrism, such as the use of mantras, maṇḍalas, and even the critical identification of the practitioner with deities may in some cases be absent from examples that should still, from their balance of characteristics, be classified as Tantric in nature.[12] More recently, Gil Raz has also proposed a polythetic approach to early Daoism so as to include within the fold of Daoism a cluster of early movements that did not venerate Zhāng Dàolíng 張道陵,[13] whose acknowledgement as founding patriarch Strickmann famously identified as one of three elements definitive of Daoism, along with "worship [of] the pure emanations of the Dao rather than the vulgar gods of the people at large" and "esoteric rites of transmission."[14]

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[11] As with most concepts central to the history of Tantrism, Strickmann first identified the centrality of "consecration" as "quasi-royal rite of empowerment" in Tantric Buddhism and its "proto-Tantric" precursors. See Michel Strickmann, "The *Consecration Sūtra*," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr., (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 85.

[12] Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 119-121. Davidson here presents a useful dialogue found in Tibetan sources from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries which first affirms and then rejects identification with a deity as *the* defining characteristic of what should be classified as Tantric. Despite the theoretical importance of this evidence, any "polythetic" or other analysis of patterns must be sensitive to proportion, and arguably the examples given by the fifteenth-century Tibetan exegete rejecting identification with a deity as the acid test of Tantrism constitute exceptions that prove the rule, rather than conditions which should fundamentally influence definitive parameters. Surely the utility of a polythetic method derives in large part from its resilience against excessive or category-distorting influence from what amount to statistical outliers.

[13] Gil Raz, *The Emergence of Daoism* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 14-21.

[14] Michel Strickmann, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching," in *Facets of Taoism: Essays on Chinese Religion*, edited by Holmes and Welch and Anna Seidel, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 165-6. In his recent study of early Daoism, Terry Kleeman (2016:3) has countered Raz's argument on this point by stressing how movements grouped together by Raz's categorization instead "clearly saw themselves as distinct." Here Kleeman calls for renewed recognition of Strickmann's observation that the Daoist religion as a social reality sprang from the Way of the Celestial Master, whose founding patriarch has endured as a primary symbol of authority and historic continuity to the present. As important as such internal divisions are to the specific histories of religious movements, let me here propose that in forming analytic categories, the historian of religions may often be justified in identifying patterns and relationships which for reasons of sectarian politics and religious claims may be suppressed or unrecognized by historical religious groups and actors themselves. If we take linguistics as a useful metaphor for cultural analysis, even when, for example, native speakers of different varieties of Mínnán find Mínnán dialects other than their own borderline unintelligible, and moreover do not possess the concepts of a Mínnán or Mín language groups, the perspective of these native speakers cannot be taken to reject the

Despite the complex pluralities of medieval Daoism, compared with the traditions that should, I argue, be recognized as related forms of Ritual Method, Daoism is by far a more broadly unified phenomenon, as both the central symbol of the Celestial Master and the formation of an integrated Daoist order in the Táng demonstrate. Thus the adoption of a polythetic approach will be all the more crucial to apprehending the diverse and hydra-headed Ritual Method movement, and will necessarily include more factors than the relatively concise definitions of Daoism which Strickmann, Raz and others have put forward. Nevertheless, the multiplicity of elements which I identify below are, with flexible degrees of inclusion, consistently visible throughout different expressions of Ritual Method, which share a common ritual orientation toward mastery over the primary ritual subjects of the Common Religion: the deified and unhallowed dead, and spirits inhabiting the terrestrial environment.

To bring the Ritual Method movement into view, I will here, by way of overture approach the subject through three different registers or frames: 1) ritual and symbolic constitution, 2) historical backgrounds, and 3) textual elements. The inevitable overlap among these categories will help further reinforce linkages among these elements, while the full import of these areas will unfold over the course of the study.

existence of larger linguistic groupings of which they are unaware, or in some cases actively reject for political reasons.

Ritual and Symbolic Constitution

The Ritual Method is the tradition of the Ritual Master or Ritual Officer, which first enters the textual record with the 10th C Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, and involves:

1) a pantheon of one or more Ancestral Masters 祖師 (or other main deity 主帥, 主法, etc.) heading a subordinate pantheon of martial spirits, primarily assimilated local deities and their spirit-soldiers, subordinated to the Ancestral Master and the tradition he or she represents, and in relation to which 2) the Ritual Master employs techniques of what I call "liturgical identification" to ritually transform into or otherwise represent, embody, or resemble his or her Ancestral Master (or other deity) in order to 3) deploy the subordinate spirits and spirit-soldiers so as to compel or control the deified humans and environmental spirits of the Common Religion 4) primarily through what Schipper called "military metaphors," though also employing what Davis shows are legalistic techniques, in order to 5) effect ritual healing, purification, protection, and other ritual transfers and transformations.

Importantly, 6) this military paradigm and its legalistic auxiliary depend on the symbolic construction of bodies for spiritual entities, bodies upon which compulsive violence can be applied, or be nourished through material offerings. The body likewise forms a common symbol linking spirit-images, Spirit-mediums, human ritual subjects, their substitute bodies, and the spiritual entities targeted by ritual, with the form and symbol of the body functioning as a medium for ritual transfers, in which the interplay between symbolic, material, and living bodies forms a major dimension of ritual technique.

As a master of spirits, the Ritual Master is likewise uniquely positioned to manage the cults of the gods enshrined in altars of the Common Religion, and is thus not merely a purveyor of rites

for healing and protection, but in many cases 7) is the ritual expert primarily responsible for the reproduction and maintenance of the temple cult itself, including 8) the ritual facilitation of Spirit-medium performance and training. The relevance of this role often varies, however, in direct relation to whether a particular Ritual Master altar -tradition more nearly resembles that of Daoist priests, and is thus less likely to cooperate with mediums as a matter of routine, or by virtue of greater social and cultural proximity with Spirit-mediums are more likely to perform in tandem with mediums on a regular basis.

Ultimately, these eight elements largely flow from the basic nature of the Ritual Method as a means of subduing and managing the spirits of the Common Religion, informed by a specific historical synthesis among Tantric, Daoist, and Popular-mediumistic techniques. Ritual Method pantheons are characterized by local deities –including those of Indian extraction– which have become historically subordinated to a priestly tradition, symbolized by an Ancestral Master or other deity who in many cases has acquired regional or supra-local status, and by his or her identification with these relatively more powerful deities, the Ritual Officer is empowered to control the spirits and Spirit-mediums of local cults, presiding over them as a ritual magistrate in command of marital subordinates who apply coercive violence on spiritual entities. This regime of spiritual violence is enacted through an extensive discourse of embodiment, in which liturgical texts and visual media depict spirits as possessing bodies which are no mere metaphor for ostensibly "formless" entities, but function as the basis whereby spirit-armies, martial gods, and hence the Ritual Master can compel and control spiritual beings. This paradigm of embodiment, and its context within a violent religious imaginary forms a central component of the Ritual Method movement, its texts, and its construction of ritual efficacy.

The subordinate spirits of the Ritual Officer's altar, from the Prime Marshals down to the Spirit-soldiers, are different from the generals and soldiers of the medieval Daoist's register 籙, in that unlike the internalized generals, bailiffs and soldiers bestowed upon the body of the Daoist by his or her initiatory register, the Prime Marshals, Spirit Officers, and Ritual Method-style Spirit-soldiers are independent spiritual entities that must be maintained through ritual offerings, including the Daoist anathema of "bloody sacrifice." While the generals and lictors of the Daoist register must be "externalized" 出官, the Spirit-generals, Prime Marshals and Spirit-soldiers of the Ritual Master are already external, and must be summoned from outside to descend into the ritual space.[15] Moreover, their labors must be rewarded by offerings of incense, food, money, and military supplies. Even the horses must be fed actual grass and water. Thus Daoist Ritual Method texts prescribe sacrificial offerings for the nourishment of these martial deities, including regular "Rewarding of Troops" 犒賞, a term used in early Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ sources and by modern Ritual Masters of every variety.[16] This requirement to sacrificially reward a deity's spirit-soldiers is one of several factors that have made Ritual Method ceremony of the more Tantric-Popular variety an embedded element in the structure of the temple cult itself.

Ultimately, a fundamental orientation toward ritual control over the deified dead and environmental spirits of the Common Religion is both the most basic context shaping the Ritual Method, and its most basic difference with classical Daoism, which is primarily oriented toward

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[15] Though to be sure, the symbolic interiorization of Daoist Prime Marshals and Spirit-Officers in certain schools of Thunder ritual, for example, constitute an important strategy whereby Ritual Method spirits and their associated rites were translated into a more traditional, interiorized conception of Daoist cultivation. See for example DFHY 69, much of which is translated in Florian Reiter, *Basic Conditions of Taoist Thunder Magic*, 19-31. Such identification of Prime Marshals with bodily organs, and their activation coordinated with techniques of qì-circulation is not found in the earlier Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ tradition, and is, I believe, a substantial re-interpretation of these "blood-eating"血食 deities within a more traditional framework of Daoist meditation.

[16] See for example 太上助國救民總祕要, j. 6 and j.9.

bureaucratic transactions with the deathless divinities of its Daoist celestial bureaucracy. Daoist traditions of exorcism, which historically served to combat local and environmental spirits, constitute major sources of the Ritual Method movement, and from the Sòng onward, symbols of medieval Daoist exorcism are generally grouped together with Ritual Method Prime Marshals, Spirit Officers, emissaries, generals, and Thunder gods in texts of the Míng Daoist Canon and later liturgical texts, like those of the Táinán-area Língbǎo tradition. Elements of medieval Daoist exorcism formed major sources of the Ritual Method movement, and from the Sòng onward, symbols and phrases connected with medieval Daoist exorcism came to be concentrated into the symbolic domain of the Fǎ 法 as this grew to be the primary ritual paradigm in which exorcistic symbols were organized and interpreted.

Historical Backgrounds: Ancient Daoist Exorcsim

Building on the work of previous scholars, it is possible now to see how the Ritual Method movement is a historical synthesis that took shape from the late Táng through the Sòng, primarily in Fújiàn and Jiāngxī, in which ancient Daoist traditions of exorcism, techniques of Spirit-mediums (Wū 巫), and ritual technologies of Tantric Buddhism were drawn together around the center-of-gravity formed by the phenomenon of spirit-possession, involving Spirit-mediums and their immanent local deities. As both Poul Andersen and Edward Davis have shown, emergence of Ritual Method traditions involved patterns of exchange among priestly ritual experts and Spirit-mediums, with such exchange alternately fueled by opposition and collaboration. Two broad developments largely catalyzed this intensified exchange among ritual experts: first, the dissimenation of Tantric ritual technologies into Chinese society, by both Buddhist monastics and lay pracitioners, and second, the historic energization of local cults from the late Táng onward, a

process driven by a demographic shift into southern China,[17] and ensuing economic and social developments. Though his assessment is possibly applicable to the preceding two centuries as well, Davis has summarized these trends in the Sòng noting that

> By the twelfth century, the contradiction between what I see as the centripetal forces of commercialization and urbanization (forces represented in the urban shehui) and the centrifugal forces of demographic and geographic expansion (forces represented in the proliferation of rural she) gave new intensity to the old conflict between Daoism and local cults.[18]

At a broader level, this conflict involved a political and material front through the Northern Sòng court's attempts to suppress Spirit-mediums and destroy their rapidly proliferating shrines, a policy which Davis, summarizing the work of Japanese scholars, finds resulted "not so much suppression as the integration of cults and spirits into a hierarchy of temples and gods."[19] More recently, Hsieh Shu-wei has argued that by partially reducing the social predominance of Spirit-mediums and an earlier class of Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters, the Sòng prohibitions created an opening in the ritual marketplace –particularly in regions of south and southeastern China– which allowed Daoist Ritual Masters to expand their presence in local society.[20] Matsumoto Kōichi has further argued that this policy, pursued most vigorously by the great patron of Daoism, Emperor Huīzōng (r. 1100-1126), was part of a larger strategy, encompassing the promotion of Daoism and the granting of titles to local gods, which sought "to create a single sacrificial system with the emperor at its

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[17] See Robert Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750- 1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 2. (Dec., 1982): 365-442; and David Johnson, "The City-God Cults of T'ang and Sung China." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Dec., 1985): 363-457.

[18] Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, 13.
[19] Ibid., 63.
[20] Hsieh Shu-wei 謝世維, 《道密法圓：道教與密教之文化研究》(臺北市：新文豐, 民 107[2018])，25-32.

heart."[21] Thus, scholars have tended to conclude that the Northern Sòng attempts to suppress Spirit-mediums and their temples resulted ultimately in greater degrees of engagement and integration among Daoists and mediumistic local cults, with Daoists seeking or claiming the high ground relative to these local deities, a position based in both their own religious premises, and the imprimatur of state sanction.

In the religious and ritual texts, this conflict between priestly traditions and mediumistic cults took the form of a spiritualized culture war, of both rhetorical and ritual dimensions. In its, mythic countours, this spiritual war witnessed the vanquishment of dangerous local deities by prototypical Ritual Masters like Chén Jìnggū, Sā Shǒujiān, and Zhāng Dàolíng, who was rebranded as an exorcist by proponents of the Tiānxīn tradition. In this mythic conquest of local gods, Ritual Method technologies enable these prototypical Ritual Masters to subdue malevolent deities, and transform them into subordinate spirits. As these haigiographies of prototypical Ritual Masters encapusulate major aspects of the Ritual Method synthesis, I will outline this theme in a following section. However, these developments of the late Táng and Sòng eras must be seen in light of the ancient antagonism between Daoist traditions and local mediumistic cults, which forms one of the fundamental dynamics shaping the formation and history of Daoism since its inception.

As the works of Strickmann and Nickerson in particular have emphasized, early Daoists cast their religion as a remedy to the cosmic and social decay they saw embodied in worship of the deified dead, singling out for particular opprobrium martial spirits, the "dead generals of defeated

[21] Matsumoto Kōichi, "Daoism and Popular Religion in the Song," in *Modern Chinese Religion I: Song-Liao-Jin-Yuan (960-1368 AD)* Volume 1, edited by John Lagerwey and Pierre Marsone (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 314.

armies and dead soldiers of routed armies"敗軍死將亂軍死兵 enshrined as "generals" and "ladies" in local temples of medieval society.[22] With protection against environmental spirits likewise an important concern for early Daoists,[23] a range of exorcistic measures formed central parts of early Daoist practice, from endowing the initiate with spirit-generals and spirit-soldiers as part of their initiatory registers 籙, to prosecuting a culture war, both ritual and rhetorical, on cults to the deified dead and predatory environmental spirits.

Daoist texts and ultimately the culture at large identified spirits of the dead and vapors emanating from corpses and graves as the main sources of illness and misfortune, a theodicy in long-running tension with Daoism's original impulse to link illness and healing with moral transgression and ritualized repentance. Thus despite the Daoist moralization of illness and its corresponding bureaucratic therapy,[24] early Daoism also a featured a war on the spirits of the dead and malevolent environmental entities –including those enshrined in local temples, fully cast in martial terms, involving spirit-generals, spirit-soldiers, and vast armies to battle the forces of death, disease, and disorder.[25]

As Davis remarks in the passage quoted above, the emergence of new forms of exorcistic Daoism in the Sòng represented the re-escalation of Daoism's ancient confrontation with

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[22] The famous formulation from the *Lù Xiānshēng Dàomén Kēlüè* 陸先生道門科略, ZHDZ 8:556-559 TC 126-7.

[23] One classic example is found in the talismanic writs of the Three Soveriegns, or Sānhuáng Wén 三皇文, which Gé Hòng 葛洪(283-343) extolled as highly efficacious for warding off all manner of misfortune and spiritual danger, and was useful for protection against "tigers, wolves, and mountain sprites" when venturing into the mountains to practice cultivation. See EOT 337-8.

[24] For the most detailed presentation of early Celestial Master rites of healing via bureaucratic submission of petitions, see Kleeman (2016) 354-379.

[25] The most extensive depiction of this early Daoist "war on the specters" is found in the *Tàishàng Dòngyuán Shénzhōu Jīng* 太上洞淵神咒經, ZHDZ 30:1-83; 敦煌文: ZHDZ30:84-116, TC 267-272.

mediumistic cults in response to their historic energization from the late Táng onward.[26] Hence it comes as no surprise that numerous symbols of early Daoist exorcism form conspicuous factors in the texts, pantheons, and rites of the Ritual Method synthesis, and are visible across historical sources from Sòng-era Daoism to the Táinán-area Minor Rite invocations. The trajectories of these symbols and textual elements of ancient Daoist exorcism reveal important stages in the history of Daoism and the formation of the Ritual Method movement. Moreover, these elements and developments arising from them have acquired ubiquity and prominence in all forms of Ritual Method; as such these factors, and the histories they trace through the textual record indicate that even within the Tantric-Popular domain, there is no Ritual Method devoid of Daoist influence, and that such influence is not a later accretion, but rather fundamental to the basic constitution of the Ritual Method movement as a whole.

The Tiānpéng Invocation 天蓬咒 and its historical traditions

Among the streams converging in the formation of the Ritual Method movement, in terms of its Daoist domain, and what will become major textual hallmarks of the movement as a whole, arguably no single text or set of symbols have exerted greater influence on the entire Ritual Method movement than the famous Tiānpéng Invocation and its related tradition of the Northern Emperor 北帝(Běidì). The Tiānpéng Invocation appears in the early 6th century *Zhēn Gào* 真誥 (*Declarations of the Perfected*), as part of "the Northern Emperor's [Ritual] Method of Slaying Demonic Dead" 北帝煞鬼之法.[27] The text of the Tiānpéng Invocation is, with minor variations, reproduced at least thirty times in the Míng Daoist Canon, mostly in texts of Sòng-Yuán-Míng

[26] Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, 13.
[27] ZHDZ 2:174, TC 198-200, EOT 979.

Ritual Method, with still more quotations and adaptations taken from it.[28] A Táng and Five Dynasties era tradition of the Northern Emperor based around the Tiānpéng Invocation would serve as a direct source of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, the first full-fledged manifestation of Ritual Method in the historical record.[29]

Furthermore, key symbols from the invocation rise to prominence in Sòng-era Ritual Method Daoism, most notably the pair of Tiānpéng and Tiānyòu 天猷, who through iconographic transformation became the Tantric-style pair among the Four Saints of the North Pole 北極四聖, along with the Wū-style deities Zhēnwǔ 真武 and Hēishā 黑煞.[30] This pantheon of the Four Saints of the North Pole would become ubiquitous in Sòng Daoism, and as will be discussed below, the four are still represented in virtually every Minor Rite invocation folio in the important stanza for the Thirty-six Official Generals 三十六官將, and are invoked in a majority of Táinán-area Minor Rite performances, though because the writing of their names has become corrupted, their identities have until now eluded both practitioners and previous researchers alike.

In addition to the pair of Tiānpéng and Tiānyòu, other figures of enduring relevance also originate from the ancient Tiānpéng Invocation, including another pair, "Demon-swallower and

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[28] For the time being, I will direct readers to Strickmann's translation found in "History, Anthropology, and Chinese religion," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40 (1980): 228-9. The original text in *Zhēn Gào* j.10 reads: 北帝煞鬼之法。先叩齒三十六下乃祝曰:

天蓬天蓬	九元煞童	五丁都司	高刁北公	七政八靈	太上浩凶
長顱巨獸	手把帝鐘	素梟三晨	嚴駕夔龍	威劒神王	斬邪滅蹤
紫氣乘天	丹霞赫衝	吞魔食鬼	橫身飲風	蒼舌綠齒	四目老翁
天丁力士	威南禦凶	天騶激戾	威北銜鋒	三十萬兵	衛我九重
辟尸千里	去却不祥	敢有小鬼	欲來見狀	攫天大斧	斬鬼五形
炎帝裂血	北斗燃骨	四明破骸	天猷滅類	神刀一下	萬鬼自潰

[29] On this tradition see Christine Mollier, "La méthode de l'empereur du nord du mont Fengdu: Une tradition exorciste du Taoisme medieval," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, Vol. 83, Fasc. 4/5 (1997): 329-385. On the relation to the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ see Poul Andersen TC 1191, and the discussion below.

[30] Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, 67-86.

Ghost-eater" 吞魔食鬼. In the text of the invocation, it is not entirely clear whether this phrase is meant to indicate separate figures or describe Tiānpéng's exorcistic ingestion of spirits, but later texts took them to be a pair of spirit-devouring generals,[31] and the two eventually became part of the Mínnán-Taiwanese iteration of the Thirty-six Official Generals, depicted in Minor Rite invocations, temple murals, and as Door Gods.[32] This protean pantheon of Thirty-six Generals, though not mentioned in the original Tiānpéng Invocation, still originated from it, and came to be associated with Tiānpéng in many later canonical sources, beginning with a major text of the Northern Emperor tradition, and a direct influence on the Tiānxīn tradition, the *Tàishàng Yuánshǐ Tiānzūn Shuō Běidì Fúmó Zhòu Miàojīng* 太上元始天尊說北帝伏魔神咒妙經.[33] In this pivotal text, which represents a developed form of proto-Ritual Method Daoism, when the Tiānpéng Invocation is presented for the first time, each four-character phrase is explained as referring to one or several deities, and as Andersen has shown, this same interpretation of the Tiānpéng Invocation was adopted and further elaborated in the first work of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, the *Tàishàng Zhùguó Jiùmín Zōngzhēn Mìyào* 太上助國救民總真祕要.[34] It seems likely this association giving Tiānpéng a pantheon of thirty-six generals is linked to the simple fact that there

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[31] For a few notable examples see 太上元始天尊說北帝伏魔神咒妙經 j.1 ZHDZ 30:169-70; 太上助國救民總真秘要 j.3, 天蓬追鬼法並符, ZHDZ 30:331-335; 上清天心正法 卷 5, 追治山魈, 丁甲符; 無上玄元三天玉堂大法 卷 27, 驅除制伏品, 治邪蠱吞魔食鬼符 ; 無上玄元三天玉堂大法 卷 28, 役召將兵品, 新頒驅邪院將吏; 靈寶領教濟度金書 卷 7 聖真班位品, 五開度祈禳通用, 天蓬官將聖位; 無上黃籙大齋立成儀 卷 53 神位門 三, 左三班; 法海遺珠 45, 紫宸玄書 一, 主將; 道法會元 156, 上清天蓬伏魔大法, 三十六將化身主事; 道法會元 156, 上清天蓬伏魔大法, 八靈八人.

[32] E.g. CXT 3.9, CXT 21 前壇諸大將, 58 三十六將, CXT 173 吞精大將軍, CXT 174 食鬼大將軍.

[33] The Tiānpéng Invocation and its interpretation as indicating groups of deities appears in j.1, ZHDZ 30:169-70

[34] On the *Tàishàng Yuánshǐ Tiānzūn Shuō Běidì Fúmó Zhòu Miàojīng* see TC 1189-1191. For the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, the *Tàishàng Zhùguó Jiùmín Zōngzhēn Mìyào* see TC 1057-60. The section in question occurs in juan 3 of the *Zhùguó Jiùmín Zōngzhēn Mìyào* , and forms much of a "Tiānpéng Ritual Method of Rescuing and Curing"天蓬救治法, (ZHDZ 30:330-5), where talismans and identities are given to these thirty-six, who are in many cases grouped into units and not simply 36 separate deities per se.

are thirty-six four-character phrases in the invocation itself, while moreover the ritual instructions in the *Zhēn Gào* direct the adept to first clack or grind their teeth together thirty-six times before reciting the invocation.

The Tiānpéng Invocation presents another curious figure, the "Four-eyed Old Man" 四目老翁, who also acquired independent status as an exorcistic figure in many canonical texts,[35] and in the Táinán-area Língbǎo Jiào 醮 is arguably the second deity summoned in the opening of the Jiào proper, preceded only by the Nine-Phoenix, Destroyer of Filth 九鳳破穢 (to whom we will soon turn). With his name and identity drawn wholly from his distinctive appearance, this exorcistic figure of the Four-eyed Old Man immediately calls to mind another four-eyed exorcistic character of ancient China, the masked Fāngxiàng Shì 方相氏 of the Nuó 儺, whose "four eyes" constitute a prominent part of his classic appearance.[36] The possible linkage between the Fāngxiàng Shì and our Four-eyed Old Man is further suggested by several historical texts which call this masked figure the "Old Man of the Nuó" 儺翁.[37] Given the overtly exorcistic contexts of

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[35] In his EOT entry on the "*Tianpeng zhou* 天蓬咒 Tianpeng spell," Yamada Toshiaki interprets the phrase 四目老翁 to be a description of Tiānpéng himself, rather than indicating a separate figure. This is one possible reading of the text, but later Daoists clearly saw this four-character phrase as indicating a separate deity, as can be seen in most of the same texts and passages cited above. For but a small set of other examples see: 靈寶領教濟度金書 卷 205, 科儀立成品, 一百九十四北帝齋用 一, 官將醮儀, 請稱法位; 太上北斗二十八章經, 北元統章第十五 (and throughout); 法海遺珠 15 , 奏傳混鍊法式, 召符吏呪; 法海遺珠 45, 紫宸玄書 一, 副將 ;道法會元 156, 上清天蓬伏魔大法, 將班; 道法會元 159, 上清天蓬伏魔大法, 召四目老翁神咒; 道法會元 166, 上清天蓬伏魔大法, 書火獄符訣.

[36] As the Hàn-era *Zhōulǐ* 周禮注疏 reports: 方相氏蒙熊皮黃金四目玄衣朱裳執戈揚盾帥百隸為之歐疫厲鬼也。（重刊宋本十三經注疏附校勘記 / 重栞宋本周禮注疏附挍勘記 / 春官宗伯下 / 附釋音周禮注疏卷第二十五 / 占夢）.

[37] A Sòng-era encyclopedia: 歲時習俗資料彙編 / 歲時廣記（十萬卷樓叢書本） / 卷第四十 / 歲除 / 逐除儺(P.1219)..[清光緒歸安陸氏刊十萬卷樓叢書本]

逐除儺

呂氏春秋季冬紀注曰前歲一日擊鼓驅疫癘之鬼謂之逐除亦曰儺李綽秦中歲時記云歲除日儺皆作鬼神狀二老人名為儺翁儺母東坡詩云爆竹驚隣鬼驅儺聚小兒又古詞云萬戶與千門驅儺鼎沸.

these figures, with their similar, iconic appearances and nomenclature, the likelihood of some linkage between the Fāngxiàng Shì of the Nuó and the Four-eyed Old Man of the 6th C. Tiānpéng Invocation seems rather high, and later sources such as the seventh century *Book of the Suí* 隨書 and the eleventh century *New Book of the Táng* 新唐書 likewise affirm the classic four-eyed appearance of the Fāngxiàng Shì.[38] If our Four-eyed Old Man is in fact an avatar of the Fāngxiàng Shì, who led the ancient Nuó exorcisim in the imperial palace and villages empire-wide, then it is all the more remarkable that it is the Four-eyed Old Man who leads the way, symbolically, in the grand classical Jiào of the Táinán Língbǎo tradition, at the exorcistic vanguard of the Announcement of the Memorial, one of the two most fully Ritual Method-oriented rites of the

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This Yuán source mentions both 儺翁 and Zhōngkuí 鍾馗: 事林廣記 / 前集 / 卷之二 / 節序類 / 歲時雜記 / 十二月 / 除日(P.62)..[明萬曆間刊本]

【除日】除夜除夕歲除歲終一日為除日記月令云是月也日窮干次月窮于紀星回于天数將幾終歲旦更始呂氏春秋云歲前一日擊鼓驅疫癘之鬼謂之逐除亦曰驅儺李綽秦中歲時記云歲除日儺皆作鬼神狀二老人為儺翁儺母唐輦下歲時記云明皇晝寢忽夢虛耗二鬼怒呼武士俄有大人頂帽衣袍捉鬼擘而啖之問其姓氏乃終南山進士鍾馗也今人掛鍾馗乃食虛耗也荊楚歲時記云徐日家家具殽蔌謂宿歲之儲以迎新年相聚酣飲留宿歲飲至新年則棄街衢以為去故納新閩中風俗除日以食物送窮想此義也神異經云山臊鬼犯人則病其鬼畏爆竹声今人故作火爆南部新書云歲除日大常卿領官屬樂吏并護童倀子千人晚入內至夜於寢殿前儺燃蠟炬燎沉檀熒煌如晝上与親王妃王以下觀之其夕賞賜甚多今人除夜滿室皆點燈照歲是其故事也夢華錄云除日禁中呈大驅儺儀並用皇城親事官諸班直假面綉衣裝將軍門神判官鍾馗小妹土地□□龜神之類共千餘人自禁中驅崇出南薰門外轉龍弯謂之埋崇而罷是夜禁中爆竹山呼声聞于外士庶之家圍炉團坐達旦不寢謂之守歲有宵夜果子古詩云歲序已云殫春心不自安聊開栢葉盞試奠五辛盤金箔塗神燕朱泥印鬼丸梅花應可折請為雪中看.

A Míng encyclopedia: 四明叢書 / 四明叢書：第四集 / 深省堂詩集　明　萬斯備　撰 / 歲暮呈同社次呆堂先生韻四首(P.31-2)..[張氏約園刊本]

萬事懸猜若可憑到今惟有一貧增儺翁逐鬼猶攜母戶尉依人只對丞南北遙分年夜酒弟兄各照歲除鐙相思定有家鄉夢倦眼朦朦睡未曾.

Still more can be found in the commentary included in this Qīng encyclopedia: 歲時習俗資料彙編 / 古今類傳 / 卷之四 / 冬令 / 十二月日次 / 三十(P.610)..[清康熙三十一年未學齋刊本].

[38] 隋書，志　凡三十卷，卷八　志第三，禮儀三，儺；新唐書，志　凡五十卷，卷十六　志第六，禮樂六，五禮六，軍禮，大儺之禮。All texts here cited are from the Scripta Sinica database.

Língbǎo tradition.[39] And immediately following the Four-eyed Old Man in this rite is Prime Marshal Tiānpéng.[40]

Beyond the far-reaching influence of these symbols in the Tiānpéng Invocation, this text also appears to be the origin or earliest record of what will become two definitive hallmarks of Ritual Method liturgical texts. First, we find here a kind of dynamic, iconographic language which describes the appearance of the deity, including the objects they hold in their hands, and the spiritual actions they perform with these objects. Here Tiānpéng "in his hand holds an imperial bell" 手把帝鐘, an image oft-repeated in later sources, which also likens this fearsome deity unto a priest, thus foreshadowing the practice of liturgical identification through the strongly involuted strand in Chinese religious iconography, in which deities are often depicted in the garb and guise of the ritual experts who serve them. And secondly, here we have perhaps the first lyric Daoist text to feature language depicting graphic spiritual violence, which functions as both a dramatization of the gods' powers and as a form of ritual command, generally effecting or threatening exorcistic power by its pronouncement. Tiānpéng is described as a "spirit-king with a mighty sword, slaying perverse [entities] and destroying their traces"威劒神王，斬邪滅蹤. Farther down "he grasps a big axe and chops demonic dead into five pieces"攫天大斧, 斬鬼五形. Still more violent language of rending blood and incinerating bones follows, and the invocation ends with the phrases "Tiānyòu exterminates their kind, one stroke of the divine blade, and the myriad ghosts spontaneously implode"天猷滅類，神刀一下，萬鬼自潰.

[39] The other being the Harmonization of Epidemics 和瘟 performed in the Royal Jiào.
[40] Ōfuchi 244.

Together with related techniques of iconographic language, such depictions of violence will become major hallmarks of Ritual Method liturgical texts, and will acquire a vocabulary of stock phrases visible in the texts of every form of Ritual Method. These definitive literary techniques can all be traced to the early 6th C. Tiānpéng Invocation.

A tradition associated with Tiānpéng and the Emperor of the North was transmitted through the Táng and, as Andersen has shown, directly influenced the earliest form of fully developed Ritual Method in the textual record, the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ. One text in particular, the *Tàishàng Yuánshǐ Tiānzūn Shuō Běidì Fúmó Shénzhòu Miàojīng* 太上元始天尊說北帝伏魔神咒妙經 (*Supreme [Lord] of the Primal Origin Preaches the Marvelous Scripture of the Northern Emperor's Divine Invocation for Subduing Demons*),[41] is a Sòng redaction containing earlier material of the Táng-era tradition, and gives an exposition of the Tiānpéng Invocation "in which each four characters of the invocation is associated with a particular deity or group of deities...[and which] is also found in [DZ] 1227, *Taishang zhuguo jiumin zongzhen biyao* [太上助國救民總真秘要]...where the deities are further represented by fu [talismans 符]. It would appear that the tradition of the present book served as a source for the Tianxin zhengfa."[42]

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[41] ZHDZ 30:164-204 (DZ 1412), TC 1189-91.

[42] Andersen, TC 1191. Andersen further notes that "the preface to [DZ] 566 *Shangqing tianxin zhengfa* (1a) states that Mount Huagai 華蓋山, the place of origin of a part of the Tianxin zhengfa, was earlier the site of the appearance into the world of the *Fumo jing*," with the latter, according to the *Sāndòng Xiūdào Yí* 三洞修道儀 (ZHDZ 42:259), being reportedly one of the three principle texts of the "Daoists of the Great Obscurity of the Emperor of the North" 北帝太玄道士. Based on the description given in the *Sāndòng Xiūdào Yí* of their tradition –including an expansion of the Tiānpéng invocation into an entire *Tiānpéng Scripture* 天蓬經, and an emphasis on controlling the demons and deities of the Six Heavens– Andersen further concludes that there "can be little doubt that the present book [*Tàishàng Yuánshī Shuō Běidì Fúmó Shénzhòu Miàojīng* 太上元始天尊說北帝伏魔神咒妙經] forms part of these practices and materials." (TC 1189). Nevertheless, Andersen is careful to detail how "the date of its composition remains uncertain," and though "a book with the title *Beidi Jing* 北帝經, containing some of the material of our text, had already been transmitted during the Tang dynasty," in its redacted form the canonical text "cannot be earlier than the end of the tenth century [...as it] includes a postscript that mentions the Four Saints (四聖), and gives the name Yisheng 翊聖 to the divine protector of the Song

In fact, this and other texts of the Tiānxīn tradition are replete with the symbols of Tiānpéng and the Emperor of the North, but between this earlier and influential *Běidì Fúmó Shénzhòu Miàojīng* and the early 12th C texts of the Tiānxīn tradition, we can see that the latter embody the full-fledged Ritual Method synthesis, while the *Běidì Fúmó Shénzhòu Miàojīng* represents an earlier exorcistic tradition in which we find no Ritual Officer 法官. Furthermore, though there are classic formula of transformation of the priest's body into a cosmic body, a technique I will distinguish as "liturgical transformation," there are no techniques of what I call liturgical identification –the direct identification of the adept with a singular deity until the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ.[43] The emergence of the Tiānxīn tradition represents a qualitative development beyond

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dynasty." (TC 1189). Hence it appears that while the material of this tradition was subject to ongoing redaction, it also preserved earlier elements of a medieval and Táng-era tradition, which in turn directly influenced the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ. Simultaneously, a Tiānpéng tradition would continue to develop a range of related texts discussed by Mollier in her major 1997 article "La méthode de l'empereur du nord du mont Fengdu," which examines the texts, symbols, and practices of the historic Emperor of the North (Běidì 北帝) tradition. But Mollier's presentation generally collapses the historical frame of the texts she examines, which was less well known when she wrote this paper, which appeared before the publication of the TC volumes. Nevertheless, in Mollier's study, material which clearly bears Sòng-era symbols, like the Four Saints of the North Pole, is presented in such a way as to suggest that such texts are of Six Dynasties and Táng vintage. Importantly, her discussion of "Great community exorcisms" (p.370-372) draws from texts which TC contributors have variously dated to the Sòng, the Míng, and in one case the Táng or Five Dynasties (DZ 1265). Lagerwey, in his TC entries on a group of these texts (DZ 1415-1420, TC 1192-4), offers a tentative Míng date for DZ 1415, and argues that symbols such as the Black Killer 黑殺 likewise indicate a Sòng date for the other texts. See for example the lantern altar-diagram 燈壇圖 reproduced from *Tàishàng Yuánshǐ Tiānzūn Shuō Běidì Fúmó Shénzhòu Miàojīng* j.10 (ZHDZ 30:204),which indicates each of the Four Saints of the North Pole, and thus as Andersen notes above, cannot predate "the end of the tenth century." The earliest text cited by Mollier in this section on community exorcisms is the *Běidì Qīyuán Zǐtíng Yánshēng Mìfǎ* 北帝七元紫庭延生秘訣(DZ 1265, ZHDZ 30:241-44, TC 485-6), which, given its inclusion in the 11th C. *Yúnjí Qīqiān* 雲笈七籤, Andersen concludes "may well be of late Tang or Five Dynasties date." (TC 485). Hence we cannot so confidently accept Mollier's portrait and conclude, as Davis does, that Mollier's presentation establishes the existence of an "apocalyptic community in the lower Yangzi region during the fourth and fifth centuries [...whose priests] were itinerant exorcists who performed large-scale communal exorcisms in addition to private cures" (Davis 2001:33). Further study of the Dòngyuán Sānmèi Shénzhòu 洞淵三昧神咒 texts edited by Dù Guāngtíng could possibly yield clues substantiating the existence such "communal exorcisms" by the Táng, but Mollier does not cite these texts in her 1997 study.

[43] *Tàishàng Dòngyuán Běidì Tiānpéng Hùmìng Xiāozāi Shénzhòu Miàojīng* 太上洞淵北帝天蓬護命消災神咒妙經, ZHDZ 30:120.

its immediate influences by pioneering definitive elements of the Ritual Method synthesis, including the use of more unambiguously external spirit-soldiers drawn not from the Daoist's register of internalized spirits but from the souls of the dead, and moreover dispatched from Mount Tài 泰山, aka the Eastern Peak 東嶽, and not from the Fēngdū underworld of the older Northern Emperor tradition.

Aside from influencing the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, Daoists of the Beǐdì/Tiānpéng tradition continued to produce a considerable number of texts in the late Táng, Five Dynasties and Sòng.[44] Of central importance to my history here is one notable, short scripture, the *Tàishàng Dòngyuán Běidì Tiānpéng Hùmìng Xiāozāi Shénzhòu Miàojīng* 太上洞淵北帝天蓬護命消災神咒妙經 (*The Marvelous Scripture of the Supreme Cavern-grotto Northern Emperor's Tiānpéng Divine Invocation for Protecting Life and Eliminating Disasters*).[45] This brief text not only encapsulates the classic apocalyptic and exorcistic vision of early Daoist eschatology, it also concludes with a stanza of praise 頌 that depending on the date of this text could be either *the* earliest, or at least among the very earliest examples of a seven-character invocation in the mold that would become the basis of the Minor Rite invocation genre, and typify Ritual Method liturgical language. Appropriately enough, this lyric text is yet another invocation for Tiānpéng.

In the scripture, the Heavenly Venerable summarizes the fundamental problem which this method of exorcism, and Daoism in general seeks to redress, in which a primordial harmony is broken by moral decline, depredation by demons and government officials, and the outbreak of epidemics, all because

[44] See TC 1188-1194, ZHDZ 30:1-241.
[45] ZHDZ 30:120-122, TC 513-4.

> Pneumas of the Three Heavens are cut off, while pneumas of the Six Heavens spread. People and ghosts are not separated. Thus there are pneumas of prisoners in the underworld, pneumas of the aggrieved [dead], pneumas of perverse demons, fiendish and corrupt pneumas, which wantonly invade [the world of] living people, where they spread to become epidemic disease.[46]
> 諸餘此等蓋緣三天炁絕，六天炁行。人鬼不分，邪正未別。所以有幽囚之氣，慘怛之氣，邪魅之氣，妖淫之氣，妄侵生人，傳成疫癘。

With this brief restatement of classic Daoist theodicy, the point of Daoist exorcism is again affirmed to be nothing less than a war on death itself, and against its toxic encroachment into the realm of the living. This fundamental premise is reemphasized in the opening stages of essentially every Daoist (and most Minor Rite) ritual performances, where ritual purification is expressly directed against the spirits of the dead and the ambient traces of death that accumulate over time in the mortal world. But in this particular school of practice, the encroachment of death is countered by reciting the names of the Six Palaces of the Fēngdū underworld and the Tiānpéng Invocation. After reviewing these core methods of the Northern Emperor tradition,[47] and again reprising the diagnosis of humanity's plight ("the poison of the Six Heavens seeps in, perverse pneumas spread widely" 六天浸毒邪氣流行), the Heavenly Venerable exhorts people plagued by epidemics and other misfortunes to recite "the great divine invocation" (of Tiānpéng), and concludes his address by saying, "When people summon [divine assistance], pronounce this stanza of praise which says:

> I bow my head and follow the command of General Tiānpéng,
> Mighty spirit who pulverizes throngs of demons.
> Stately driving a Kuí-dragon, descend to the ritual arena,
> His stunning and mighty radiance moves Heaven and Earth.

[46] Ibid., ZHDZ 30:121.
[47] See Mollier, "La méthode de l'empereur du nord du mont Fengdu."

Bright stellar lord of the twenty-eight lunar mansions,
Great divine king of the thirty-six generals.
His hand holds a divine sword, slaying fiendish demons,
Wielding a precious seal, killing spirits and demons.
With a pick-axe he splits open all the earth-prisons,
The shaking of his imperial bell reaches to the heavenly palaces.
Flying thunder, lightning strikes, driving wind and clouds,
Giant celestial armored soldiers hold pike-axes.
The Fire Official of the Southern Dipper eliminates poisonous afflictions,
Water Spirit of the Northern Emperor eliminates disasters.
Subduing the great demon-kings of the Six Heavens,
Sweeping clean the ten directions of all epidemic vapors.
His fury causes the Sun and Moon to lose their essential radiance,
When he breathes, mountains and rivers roil in turmoil.
Purple pneumas rise to Heaven and descending linger,
Three-hundred-thousand [spirit-] soldiers in dense formation ready for battle.[48]

若人啟請而說頌曰
稽首皈命天蓬將　摧碎群魔大力神
嚴駕夔龍降道場　赫弈威光動天地
二十八宿明星主　三十六部大神王
手持神劒斬妖邪　掌握寶印戮精魅
钁斧劈破諸地獄　帝鐘搖振徹天宮
飛雷掣電走風雲　巨天甲卒持戈戟
南斗火官除毒害　北帝水神滅災殃
降伏六天大鬼王　掃蕩十方諸疫氣
忿怒日月失精光　呼吸山河皆鼎沸
紫氣乘天下徘徊　三十萬兵密加備

This invocation, which reworks several phrases and images from the original Tiānpéng Invocation, is quite possibly the earliest seven-character lyric invocation in the form that would become common in later Ritual Method liturgies (in four and five-character meters as well), and eventually form the literary basis of the Minor Rite tradition in Táiwān and southern Fújiàn. Though later texts will display an even more developed template and lexicon of stock phrases, most elements of the genre are present in this text. These include a framework that begins with formula of summons

[48] Ibid., ZHDZ 30:122.

followed by the deity's name, iconographic depiction of what the deity is holding and doing with their hands, a description of ritual and spiritual actions in the ritual present, (and not, primarily, recapitulation of mythic deeds),[49] depictions of graphic violence on the bodies of spirits, indications of subordinate pantheons, and descriptive language dramatizing the god's presence in the ritual arena. Only language of first-person liturgical identification is missing, though a text of the Tiānxīn tradition introduced such usage in a lyric invocation in the 12th century, with a stanza which rivals this one for historical primacy among seven-character, Ritual Method style formula.[50] In an intriguing thread, the line of this invocation that begins "Fire Official of the Southern Dipper" 南斗火官 will, with the change of but a single character, pass through a few intermediaries (notably the *Yùtáng Dàfǎ*) and into the song performed during the climactic magical dance sequence of the Táinán-area Fire Jiào 火醮 liturgy.[51] Hence the manifold influences emanating from this one invocation, and its classical forerunner, are far-reaching indeed.

Several factors argue that this scripture likely dates from around the 10th or 11th century, possibly the 12th, foremost among them this invocation, which represents a development of the Tiānpéng Invocation without any Táng-era parallel that I am aware of.[52] Furthermore, the

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[49] Here the line "With a pick-axe he splits open all the earth-prisons" may well refer to ritual performances in which a representation of an "earth-prison" is split open, as in mortuary rites of "Breaking [open] Prisons" 破獄, and the well-known Red Headed rite of "Smiting the Citadel" 打城 (Nickerson 2007).

[50] 太上助國救民總真祕要 j.8, ZHDZ 30:365; 玉堂大法 j. 25, 步罡咒, ZHDZ 30:482, which considerably expands on the earlier invocation in the *Zhùguó Jiùmín Zōngzhēn Miyào*. These invocations, and those of the Tiānpéng tradition are discussed further in my chapter on the Minor Rite invocation genre.

[51] See my forthcoming analysis of the Fire Jiào.

[52] Mollier (TC 513) offers a tentative date of the late Táng for the text, which cannot be ruled out, but would further emphasize the revolutionary nature of this seven-character invocation, which perhaps due to her focus on earlier sources does not attract Mollier's attention. Given the brevity of the scripture, and the regularity with which such short scriptures end with a lyric stanza of praise, invocation, or both, it seems unlikely the invocation is a later addition. Another possible contender for an early Ritual Method-style invocation is found in the *Tàishàng Zhèngyī Zhòuguǐ Jīng* 太上正一咒鬼經 discussed below.

scripture itself is largely a reworking of the opening sections of juàn 4 of the *Běidì Fúmó Shénzhòu Miàojīng*, and is thus later than this important text, and was likely a condensed scripture used in rituals of the same tradition. Moreover, this same seven-character invocation is reproduced in two texts of the *Supreme Purity Grand Rites of Tiānpéng for Subduing Demons* (*Shàngqīng Tiānpéng Fúmó Dàfǎ* 上清天蓬伏魔大法) that form chapters 156 through 168 of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*, and which probably date from the 12th or possibly 13th century.[53] That the scripture is likely earlier than these Tiāpéng rites of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* is suggested by the fact that while the scripture still places central emphasis on the ancient practice of reciting the names of the Six Palaces 六宮 of the Fēngdū underworld, there is no mention of the Six Palaces in the Tiānpéng rites of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*.[54]

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[53] This invocation is also reproduced in DFHY 217, ZHDZ 38:214-5. Lowell Skar (EOT 996) accepts that the Tiānpéng rites of DFHY 156-168 were "compiled by Yang Xizhen" 楊希真 (1101-1124?), as a comment embedded in depiction of the altar pantheon claims (DFHY 156, ZHDZ 37:410), thus dating these texts of the DFHY to the early twelfth century. See EOT 996-7, "Tongchu 童初, Youthful Incipience". Piet van der Loon ["A Taoist Collection of the Fourteenth Century," in *Studia Sino-Mongolia: Fetschrift für Herbert Franke*, ed. Wolfgang Bauer (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1979), 403) likewise dates these rites to the twelfth century, but instead cites the attribution given in the preface of DFHY 156 to an interesting figure, "Great Immortal Dǒng" 董大仙, who declares himself to have received the texts of the method (in three volumes 冊) in Sìchuān directly from the "Prime Marshal" (i.e. Tiānpéng). This preface (ZHDZ 37:406-7) is either purely pseudepigraphical or was obtained through spirit-writing. This same Great Immortal Dǒng is mentioned as the "On-duty Day Emissary" 日直使者 in the *Shàngqīng Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ* 上清天心正法, j. 6 (ZHDZ 30:277). Great Immortal Dǒng is invoked or mentioned several more times in the Tiānpéng rites (DFHY 156, 159, 164, 165, and 168) where he is described variously as a Master of the Lineage 宗師 or an Ancestral Master 祖師. In memorial formula found in DFHY 165 and 166 (37:484, 500), the Ritual Master addresses Great Immortal Dǒng from "before the offering-table" 几前, suggesting cultic veneration. Beyond the Tiānpéng rites, Great Immortal Dǒng is also mentioned in Tǒngchū texts (in DFHY 171, 173, 178), and likewise described as transmitting rites of Tiānpéng which, in DFHY 171 (ZHDZ 37:536) are said to derive from a *True Scripture of the Northern Emperor's Mysterious Transformation* 北帝玄變真經. In DFHY 178, in a long, detailed discussion of various ritual methods and their adaptations, the text states that "Thereupon Great Immortal Dǒng transmitted the Rites of Tiānpéng, originally so as to supplement the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ in practice" 至如董大仙傳天蓬法, 本以輔天心正法而 (ZHDZ 38:20). This one figure, the Great Immortal Dǒng thus further underscores the Tiānpéng-related thread connecting all of these ritual traditions, from the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ to the Tiānpéng and Tǒngchū rites of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*, connections traced in the primary sources to an older tradition of the Emperor of the North.

[54] The Běiyīn Fēngdū 北陰酆都 rites of the DFHY (264-268), which likewise feature Tiānpéng and the Emperor of the North, mention the Six Palaces but nowhere their names. While this formerly central element of the

A more detailed comparison with the language and symbols of other Northern Emperor texts might help shed light on these questions of dating, but given its emphasis on older practices of the tradition, together with a lyric invocation more indicative of the emerging Ritual Method performance style, the short *Tiānpéng Hùmìng Xiāozāi Shénzhòu Miàojīng* represents, I believe, a kind of transitional text straddling the more proto-Ritual Method forms of liturgical exorcism exemplified in the *Běidì Fúmó Shénzhòu Miàojīng* on which it is based, and the fully developed Ritual Method of the Tiānpéng rites of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* which in turn have drawn from it. The Tiānpéng rites represent a full-fledged expression of Ritual Method, in which the priest is called Ritual Master and Ritual Officer, and who is instructed to make prominent use of liturgical identification, complete with visualization of the fully Tantric-style appearance of Tiānpéng.[55] Furthermore, these texts feature a remarkable folio of invocations, many in the seven-character style of the Minor Rite genre, suggesting that this tradition helped pioneer the increasing use of such invocations.[56] As the Tiānpéng-influenced Tiānxīn tradition also makes early use of such seven-character invocations, the short *Tiānpéng Hùmìng Xiāozāi Shénzhòu Miàojīng* appears to reflect the formative environment of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, and may thus either slightly precede its 10th C. inception, or may represent Northern Sòng textual production of the ongoing Běidì/Tiānpéng tradition.

Even from this brief overview it is clear that the medieval Tiānpéng Invocation and a tradition centered on the Emperor of the North formed major sources of the Ritual Method

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Emperor of the North tradition thus did not figure in the new rites of the DFHY, it may have been the case that practitioners of these rites made use of other scriptures, including the short *Tiānpéng Hùmìng Xiāozāi Shénzhòu Miàojīng*, which still featured this ancient aspect of the Běidì tradition.

[55] E.g. DFHY 159, ZHDZ 30:429.

[56] See my chapter on the Minor Rite invocations for a survey of these and other early, Minor Rite-style invocations.

synthesis that enters the historical record with the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, while related traditions continued to develop during the Sòng which likewise embodied and developed the distinctive Ritual Method form of liturgy and practice. The breadth of influences arising directly and indirectly from these traditions of Tiānpéng and the Emperor of the North is remarkable, from the particular literary conventions that will become generalized throughout invocations of later Ritual Method texts, to the pantheon of Thirty-Six generals and the Four Saints of the North Pole. Tiānpéng will also become associated with one of the two or three definitive ritual implements of the Ritual Officer –the Ritual Ruler 法尺 (or "Ritual Gavel") as used in the Daoist domain of Ritual Method,[57] where this distinctive ritual wand is usually called a "Tiānpéng Ruler" 天蓬尺, with instructions on its manufacture and consecration given in *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 157.[58]

As a major outgrowth or development of this older yet vigorously evolving Běidì/Tiānpéng tradition, the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ played a central role in advancing new ritual forms in which Daoists pioneered Tantric-style liturgical identification with deities, Tantric-style iconography, deployed spirit-generals and spirit-armies increasingly unconnected with a Daoist register, but rather drawn from the spirits of the dead and sustained by sacrificial offerings, while furthermore working in conjunction with Spirit-mediums. Andersen speculates that "[i]t seems highly likely that the phenomenon of spirit-possession, and the writing of talismans by mediums in trance, contributed

[57] In the Tantric-Popular traditions of Southern Táiwān, the Ritual Ruler is called the Celestial Emperor's Ruler 天皇尺, a name which in Mínnán (t̄en ĥong chiuĥ)is something of a near-homophone of "Tiānpéng Ruler" (t̄en p̄ang chuiĥ). The Ritual Master's other two definitive ritual implements are the "Dragon Horn" 龍角 and the serpent-handled Ritual Whip 法索, aka Saint Golden Whip 金鞭聖者, both of which, and especially the whip are more strongly associated with the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method, though the serpent-handled whip may be indicated in texts of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* (esp. 155, 217, 222, 226, and 229) by the figure of General White Snake 白蛇將軍, who could be a personification of this other, major hallmark of the Ritual Master. These topics are taken up in the section on material culture.

[58] DFHY 157 上清天蓬伏魔大法， 神尺秘旨，神尺法式，ZHDZ 37:413-4.

substantially to the creation of the talismanic core of the Tianxin tradition," and concludes that "the overall image of the origin of the Tianxin tradition that emerges [from historical sources] clearly points to a renewal of Taoism, not simply from within, but as the result of a syncretism between popular mediumistic practices and the ancient forms of ritual transmitted by Zhengyi priests."[59]

Thus in recognizing the role of Emperor of the North tradition in this eventual synthesis, it is suggestive to note that one classic source for the iconography of the Wū, the late 5th C. *Book of the [Liú] Sòng* 宋書 depicts Wū, i.e. Spirit-mediums, as "bowing to the North Pole" 稽首北極.[60] As the North Pole was naturally associated with the medieval cult of the Northern Emperor (Mollier 1997:343-4), were these Spirit-mediums, with their "disheveled hair and bare feet" likewise involved somehow with the ritual domain of the Daoist Northern Emperor? Without further evidence this question cannot be definitively settled, but if such were the case then it would help explain how other spirits of the north –Zhēnwǔ, and later his "talisman emissary" the Black Killer Hēishā 黑殺(黑煞)– would come to be cast in the same Wū-style iconography, with streaming hair and bare feet, and how these deities, so closely identified with Spirit-mediums, would become central figures in the same early Ritual Method forms of Daoism that drew direct inspiration from an evolving Tiānpéng tradition.

Zhèngyī Symbols of Exorcism and Purification

If the Northern Emperor/Tiānpéng tradition formed one major stream of Daoist exorcism informing the Ritual Method synthesis, a number of symbols which will come to prominence in Ritual Master ceremony can be traced to Zhèngyī sources, and in many cases Zhèngyī registers. The exact nature and roles of Zhèngyī exorcism in medieval Daoism are, I believe, still far from

[59] EOT "Tianxin Zhengfa 天心正法", p. 991.
[60] 宋書 / 列傳　凡六十卷 / 卷七十九　列傳第三十九 / 文五王 / 廬江王禕.

clear, despite important work on such texts as the *Nǚqīng Guǐlǜ* 女青鬼律 in particular, in which knowledge of demons' names functions as the primary means of controlling them.[61] Much as the formerly central practice of reciting the names of the Six Palaces of Fēngdū disappeared from later Tiānpéng and Fēngdū Ritual Method traditions, this ancient technique and its demonological lore are conspicuous by their relatively diminished importance in the texts of Ritual Method traditions, where the summons of deities is effected not primarily through a litany of names, but increasingly through evocative, lyric invocations which dramatize the presence of the deity. Likewise the exorcistic control of demons is no longer primarily achieved through knowledge of their names (even where this played a role in rites of Investigating and Summoning 考召), but through the application of exorcistic violence wrought by spirit-soldiers and other subaltern deities, a paradigm of spiritual warfare with clear precedent in medieval Zhèngyī texts. Hence a number of notable symbols from Zhèngyī sources deserve special attention for the enhanced prominence they will acquire from the Sòng onward, and for the textual history their path through Daoist literature illuminates.

I cannot here examine in detail all of the potentially relevant symbols and textual elements which factor in this history, and so will only note several in passing, such as the various lords and bailiffs of "Investigating and Summoning" 考召 found in Zhèngyī registers and ritual texts. By the Sòng, "Investigating and Summoning" will refer to rites involving interrogation of possessed mediums, but in the context of early Zhèngyī registers may have carried more allusive and descriptive meanings which only later came to be elaborated into full-blown ritual procedures.[62] Language of "destroying temples" 破廟 forms another long-running continuity among early Zhèngyī sources and later Ritual Method texts of every kind, with Zhèngyī registers often featuring bailiffs 吏 and lords 君 named "Execution-Talisman Destroyer of Temples" 誅符破廟.

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[61] See Terry Kleeman "Exorcising the Six Heavens: The Role of Traditional State Deities in the *Demon Statues of Lady Blue*," in *Exorcism in Daoism: A Berlin* Symposium, edited by Florian Reiter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 47-70; and *Celestial Masters*, :179-189.

[62] On Summoning and Investigating see Davis (2001), and Matsumoto Kōichi 松本浩一 (2014). For figures associated with Summoning and Investigating in Zhèngyī registers see 正一法文經章官品 j.1 收土公; 正一法文經章官品 j. 1 解首過; 正一法文經章官品 j. 1 叛道求還; 正一法文經章官品 j.2 保產生胎妊; 正一法文經章官品 j. 4 主百禍治生, 正一法文法籙部儀 j.5 黃素中章; 正一法文法籙部儀 j.5 太一黃素三盟儀; 赤松子章曆 j. 3 青絲拔余章; 赤松子章曆 j. 4 收除火殃章; 赤松子章曆 j. 4 三五雜籙言功章; 赤松子章曆 j. 4 三月一時言功章; 赤松子章曆 j.6 久病大厄金紫代形章.

This particular phrase "Execution-Talisman Destroyer of Temples" and a few variations ("Executioner of Spirit-mediums and Destroyer of Temples" 誅巫破廟, etc.) can be found from Zhèngyī and Shàngqīng registers to Sòng-era texts of Ritual Method,[63] while a more general discourse of "destroying temples" 破廟, "leveling altars" 伐壇 and the like appears frequently in Ritual Method texts of every period and variety, from the Míng Daoist Canon, to Fujianese Lűshān liturgies and Taiwanese Minor Rite invocations.[64] This subject deserves a separate study, and here can only be referenced for the time being.

In light of Sòng to modern liturgies from both "hemispheres" of the Ritual Method movement, two symbols with relatively ancient roots stand out as indicative hallmarks of Ritual Method ceremony: the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth 九鳳破穢, and the On-duty Talisman Emissaries 直符使者 who will, by the early Sòng, become identified as the Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms 三界[直符]使者. By the modern period, these two symbols will stand at the leading edge of ritual as the agents of exorcistic purification and spiritual communication respectively, with the Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms in particular forming a prominent marker of Red-Headed, Tantric-Popular Ritual Master ceremony in Fújiàn and Táiwān.

One prominent set of symbols particular to the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method is the subordinate pantheon known as the Five Camps 五營, which is further notable for being foremost of the several elements of Tantric-Popular Ritual Method which have become integrated

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[63] See for example 太上三五正一盟威閱籙醮儀　忠六; 太上三洞傳授道德經紫虛籙拜表儀, 則三, 奉戒讚赤松子章曆 j .4.斷鬼□且泉章; for Shàngqīng registers see 太上洞真經洞章符, 張七, 原闕符篆; and 上清金真玉皇上元九天真靈三百六十五部元錄　集五; the transitional or "proto-Ritual Method" *Jīnsuǒ Liúzhū* Yĭn 金鎖流珠引, j.24　辭四, 誅符破廟法; Sòng Ritual Method: 太上助國救民總真祕要 j.3 祛除勞瘵眾病符訣并天蓬醜邪真法, 天蓬三十六將符口訣, here used as a verbal phrase rather than a subordinate deity: 此是天蓬大元帥真符...可以誅符破廟禁錄一切凶猛鬼神; for "Executor of Spirit-mediums and Destroyer of Temples see the pantheon in 靈寶玉鑑 j. 17 飛神謁帝門, 祭章官聖位; 法海遺珠 j.15, 奏傳混鍊法式, 召符吏呪.

[64] This rhetorical and ritual culture war to "Destroy Temples" 破廟 is given very extensive expression in canonical Daoist sources. For but a minute sample of Sòng-era Ritual Method texts, see : 道法會元 j.94 雷霆炊火張使者祕法,破廟符; 道法會元 j.97 上清飛捷五雷祈禱大法, 誅精伐邪破廟符; 道法會元 j.108 高上景霄三五混合都天大雷琅書, 破廟醜邪檄用; 道法會元 / 卷之一百十八　華五 / 太極都雷隱書　五 / 破廟伐惡; 法海遺珠 / 卷之二十三　離二 / 鄧帥大神九變炊火符法 / 第六大神親統雷部伐惡破廟真符. In Fujianese Lűshān texts see for example *Jiànyáng* 58, 破廟許旌陽, 525-6 (海清); *Guǎngjī Tán* 168, 破廟長沙王 plus a series of 滅番廟王, 斬廟王. In the Táinán-area Minor Rite, CXT 154 蕭聖者: 除瘟破廟打鑾駕; HST 50 蕭聖者神咒: 治瘟破廟打鸞駕.

into the structure and liturgical life of the temple-cult in many regions of southeastern China and its diasporic communities. Intrinsic to the cult of the Five Camps are a set of five-directional, ethno-numeric correspondences, which identify each directional camp with a numerological scheme linked to an ancient conception of four barbarian peoples inhabiting the four directions and surrounding the Qín, or Chinese themselves, in the center. This particular scheme of correspondences also originates from early Daoist texts, and after this symbolic set gained prominence in late medieval sources, would eventually become associated with the Five Camps, whose rites form a definitive and exclusive area of expertise for Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters. Hence, the history of this symbol-cluster likewise illustrates how elements of Daoist exorcism formed essential components of a broader synthesis whose very nature indicates exchange among ritual experts of differing social backgrounds.

As part of a general survey, one further symbol is also worthy of attention, as in the Táinán-area liturgies of both Daoist priests and Ritual Masters of the Minor Rite, the ancient figure Grand General White Horse of the Unadorned [Funeral] Cart 素車白馬大將軍 enjoys a minor but nonetheless surprisingly ubiquitous presence in modern ritual. The long continuities and historic adaptations of this symbol likewise point to where elements of ancient Zhèngyī (and related forms of) exorcism flowed into and were adapted by Ritual Method traditions of the Sòng and late imperial period.

The Five Camps and their Ethno-numeric Symbols

No set of symbols have become more universally identified with the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method than the five-directional subordinate pantheon known as the Five Camps 五營 (wǔ yíng/ ĝnõh yiāĥ). But despite their exclusive association with the rites of Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters, definitive attributes and textual elements of the Five Camps derive ultimately from a long history within texts of Celestial Master Daoism. Though nearly a millennium of history separates the appearance of these textual elements from their unambiguous adoption by Tantric-Popular Ritual Master traditions, the linkages among these symbols and

textual elements again demonstrates how there is no way of the Ritual Master devoid of Daoist influence. The central importance and broad distribution of these Daoist-derived Five Camps symbols shows that such Daoist elements cannot be explained as but later accretions or secondary influences. Rather, like the other symbols examined in this section, the prominence and geographic extent of this Five Camps symbolism makes clear that these elements formed important parts of Tantric-Popular Ritual Method traditions from an early date.

Moreover, the Five Camps are the most important of several elements from Tantric-Popular Ritual Master traditions to become integrated into the structure and liturgical life of the temple cult in many regions. This not only gives evidence of the historic role played by such Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters in the maintenance and reproduction of the temple cult, as the Five Camps are, like most of the 36 Official Generals, frequently involved in healing rites, the integration among these ritual symbols again points to the essential interdependence among rites for healing and personal transformation on the one hand, and rites of the temple cult and temple community on the other.

I cannot here offer a comprehensive study of the Five Camps, but will instead examine the specific symbolism deriving from Daoist sources, and by tracing developments evidenced within these sources show how the stream of symbolism and practice that flowed into the late imperial cult of the Five Camps arose from precisely those dimensions of Daoist exorcism that formed intersections among Daoism and local spirits, and which in turn underwent further development in Sòng-era Ritual Method Daoism. In this inquiry, I am greatly aided by an important study by

Lǐ Fēngmào, on whose work I will further build to historicize developments in medieval and later periods.[65]

The Five Camps are a five-directional assembly of spirit-armies, in which the five separate camps are named for the four quarters of the compass and center. These armies of the Five Camps serve to guard temples and ritual spaces, with their most visible role as guardians of temple and village precincts, where individual shrines to each camp are established at places symbolically marking the four quarters and center of the temple precinct. Normally there is a distinction between "Inner Camps" 內營 and "Outer Camps" 外營, with the former represented by an installation known as the Five Camps Heads 五營頭 enshrined inside a temple (or domestic altar) on the left-hand side of the altar, while outer shrines are placed outside the temple building itself, sometimes in a single shrine in the temple plaza, but in many cases in five separate shrines marking the temple precinct. Custom mandates that any temple of the Common Religion which holds spirit-possession or spirit-writing sessions *must* maintain these armies of the Five Camps,[66] which involves periodic offerings known as Rewarding the Troops 犒賞, and for rural temples especially, the recruitment and replacement of spirit-soldiers from the souls of the unworshipped dead believed to inhabit the ocean, as well as remote mountain wilderness. As such, the enshrinement of these dangerous spirits of the dead as protecting spirit-soldiers represents a classic example of the dynamic identified by Mary Douglass, whereby sources of dangerous impurity are often

[65] 李豐楙，「『中央-四方』空間模型: 五營信仰的營衛與境域觀」，中正大學中文學術年刊 2010 年第一期, 總第十五期, (2010 年 6 月): 33-70.

[66] Again, the cultically dissimilar temples of spirit-writing groups, who are not integrated into networks of community temples, do not maintain a cult of the Five Camps, and are not participants in the Common Religion, or Shè Huì.

harnessed to positive, socially affirmative roles, in this case by re-ordering such socially-liminal spirits of the dead within the temple cult and its incense hearth.[67]

In southern Táiwān and Pénghú, there are a cycle of rites concerning the Five Camps, from the annual renewal of outer camps known as "Settling the Camps" 安營, to rites for dispatching and withdrawing troops for specific purposes (a Daoist Jiào, or ritual procession, etc.), rites to Drill the Troops 操營, to recruit new spirit-soldiers, and to reward them for their labors. The most basic and frequently-performed of these rites is called "Summoning the Camps" (or, Dispatching the Camps) 調營 (điau yiāĥ), used to call the armies into the altar-space, usually in prelude to some other ritual procedure, such as a Rewarding of the Troops, the animation of a spirit-image, or recruitment of new spirit-soldiers, among others.[68]

The special, formulaic invocations used in the Summoning of the Camps are organized according to a fixed scheme of numerological and directional correspondences in which foreign, warlike peoples are seen as surrounding the central Qín, or Guānzhōng 關中 region on the four quarters. These correspondences among ethnic designations identified with each direction, and a specific numerological scheme derive from ancient conceptions of Chinese cultural geography, and appear first in ancient Zhèngyī sources, to which I will soon turn. As a remarkably stable symbol-cluster, these correspondences are found throughout Ritual Method liturgical manuscripts in Táiwān and Fújiàn in conjunction with the Five Camps.

Direction/Number/Ethnicity Saints of Mín-Tái 閩臺 Five Camps

[67] Mary Douglass, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concept of Pollution and Taboo.* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966 [2005 rpt.]): 160-180.

[68] Regardless of whatever ritual follows, the Summoning of the Troops is invariably receded by the Invocation of the Spirits 請神 sequence and then a special, five-directional "Opening of the Whip" procedure whose invocations are different from those at the beginning of the Invocation of the Spirits.

東九夷	Eastern Nine Yí	Zhāng 張 (Diõ̍h)
南八蠻	Southern Eight Mán	Xiāo 蕭 (Siaû)
西六戎	Western Six Róng	Liú 劉 (Laú)
北五狄	Northern Five Dí	Lián 連 (Leń)
中三秦	Central Three Qín	Lǐ 李 (Leè)

The Summoning of the Camps invocations follow a repeated template, and despite very minor variations among tradition-groups and transmission-lineages, in the greater Taiwanese tradition they are virtually identical, and feature reduplicative onomaopeic phrases, iconographic language, and a repeating, variable "fill-in-the-blank" formula that are widely characteristic of many Minor Rite invocations. This same formulaic invocation is found with but minor variations in a Lóngyán-area Lǘshān manuscript, demonstrating both linkages among the Mínnán and Lóngyán traditions, and the relatively early date by which this formulaic invocation acquired its current form.[69] The Táinán-area text reads:

> First sound of the ritual drum, loudly one by one,
> [I] summon the Eastern Camp Nine Yí Army.
> Nine Yí Army and Horses, nine thousand, ninety thousand men,
> Each man, on his head he wears a helmet, his body wears armor.
> In Hand holding the green flag, burning brilliant light,
> Dragon-chariots rumble, soldiers and horses run.
> Horses run and solders line up before the altar.
> Spirits-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the law commands.
> 一聲法鼓鬧紛紛　　召請東營九夷軍
> 九夷軍馬九千九萬人　　人人頭戴頭盔身帶甲
> 手執青旗火炎光　　龍車嘈嘈兵馬走
> 走馬排兵到壇前　　神兵火急如律令

[69] Yè and Láo, *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:180, from the 藏身一宗 manuscript. The distribution of this ritual formula from Lóngyán to Táiwān suggests that the transmission of such textual formula to these farthest reaches of Mínnán-speaking areas happened no later than the early 19th C., and possibly somewhat earlier, given the universal presence of this same formula among essentially all Tantric-Popular Ritual Master traditions in the region.

For the other camps, the numbers and directional colors change appropriately, and so the formula is repeated. Notably, in these invocations the names of the five "saints" usually do not appear, further emphasizing how the system identifying the Five Camps with the deified Ritual Masters ("Lords-of the-Rite" 法主公) Diõĥ, Siaû, Laú, Leń 張蕭劉連 (known as the Four Saints 四聖)[70], together with the Third Price Lĭ 李 (aka Prime Marshal of the Central Altar 中壇元帥)[71] represents a separate symbolic stratum that appears particular to the Mínnán littoral, though the extent of these associations remains unclear. In many regions, such as upland Fújiàn, the Five Camps are not identified with these Four Saints and the Third Prince, or indeed with any specific figures. Rather, this five-directional, ethno-numerological scheme represents a more basic framework for the Five Camps, and is widely reproduced across southeastern China and diasporic communities.

In an important 2003 article, Lĭ Fēng-mào has shown that the basics of this directional, ethno-numerical scheme appear in early Zhèngyī Daoist texts. In addition to the sourses Lĭ identifies, I have found this symbolic motif in a range of other medieval and Sòng-era texts which taken together enable a greater degree of historicization. Importantly, in none of these Daoist sources do we find the term "Five Camps." The specific association of these symbols with an independent cult of the Five Camps appears to have been a development within the realm of Tantric-Popular Ritual Method for which we have only late imperial testimony. What the Daoist texts do reveal is the history of this remarkably durable symbol-cluster, and how these symbols

[70] Not to be confused with the Daoist Four Saints of the North Pole 北極四聖. Both are discussed in the section on the 36 Official Generals.
[71] See my discussion of how the Third Prince became the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar in Chapter 3, where I marshal evidence to argue this designation has nothing to do with the Five Camps.

gradually emerged from relative obscurity within long lists of internalized divinities, and found more prominent roles in protection against pathogenic spirits, often in ritual proximity with local gods.

The two earliest texts that Lǐ cites are the *Tàishàng Sānwǔ Zhèngyī Mèngwēi Lù* 太上三五正一盟威錄[72] and the *Zhèngyī Fǎwén Fǎlù Bùyí* 正一法文法籙部儀 .[73] Tradition holds that the first of these, the *Zhèngyī Mèngwēi Lù*, is an artifact of the original revelation of Celestial Master Daoism to Zhāng Dàolíng by the deified Láozi in the second century. On this text Schipper remarks that "many early sources ...[attest that] the registers of the Sworn Alliance [*Mèngwēi Lù*] were originally bestowed on Zhang Daoling 張道陵 by Laozi in 142 [C.E.]," but concludes that the usage of Sòng-era administrative regions reveals the true date of the surviving text. Despite these later redactions, Schipper affirms that much of its contents are in fact shared by other early Zhèngyī texts such as the (early portions of the) *Chì Sōngzi Zhāng Lì* 赤松子章曆.[74] Though Lǐ does not cite the *Chì Sōngzi* in his study, we find that it too contains no less than eight memorials featuring this numerological ethno-directional scheme, to which we will return.[75]

As to the two early Zhèngyī texts cited in Lǐ's study, the first consists largely of rites and registers of initiation, while the second text, which Schipper is able to date to the early Táng,[76] features these five-directional ethno-numeric symbols as part of an "Exteriorization of Officials" 出

[72] ZHDZ 8:419-20, TC 971-2.
[73] ZHDZ 8:373-381, TC 471-2.
[74] TC:971.
[75] Schipper determines that the extant *Chì Sōngzi Zhāng Lì* (DZ 615, ZHDZ 8:620-680) dates from the Six Dynasties period (220-589) with some later additions traceable to the late Táng. TC 134-5.
[76] TC:472.

官 (chū guān, or 出神 chū shēn) practice[77] wherein the Daoist adept externalizes the divinities which ordination has bestowed upon his body as part of establishing an altar-space.[78] Lǐ then indicates where this basic symbolic scheme appears in several early Língbǎo texts as well, all part of longer invocations for the Externalization of Officials, and concludes that "in the summoning of deities in the chū guān 出官 rite, the Five Encampments had already become a fixed element."[79] As further proof of the importance and durability of these symbols in Língbǎo rites for Externalization of Officials, Lǐ finds that such usage continued in major Sòng compendia like the the *Tàishàng Huánglù Dàzhāi Lìchéng Yí* 太上黃籙大齋立成儀 and the *Tàishàng Huánglù Zhāi Yí* 太上黃籙齋儀.[80] To this list of Sòng ritual compendia, which feature these symbols as part of an Externalization of Officials technique, we can also add the *Língbǎo Língjiào Jìdù Jīnshū* 靈寶領教濟度金書,[81] and Wáng Qìzhēn's 王契真 *Shàngqīng Língbǎo Dàfǎ* 上清靈寶大法. Interestingly, these symbols occur in only one *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* text (DFHY 181), where they appear in a manner similar to these other texts, which is to say at the bottom of a long hierarchy of spirits that reside within the body of the adept.[82]

Hence in many early Zhèngyī texts and major Daoist compendia of the Táng and Sòng, this durable set of numeric ethno-directional armies appear as relatively minor elements in a long

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[77] This relevant text reads: 謹出臣身中五體真官功曹吏出太一金剛 長壽功曹二百四十人太一度世功曹二百 四十人太一度命功曹二百四十人出太一 青腰玉女二百四十人出太一娥皇玉女二 百四十人出五老君將吏二百四十人出長 生永終吏二百四十人出東九夷南八蠻西六戎北五狄中央三秦君將吏各二百四十人出千乘億騎蓋天來下剛風騎置驛馬上 章吏官各二百四十人出今授甲等 太一三盟登壇大券明真大誥之. From 正一法文法籙部儀, the section entitled 太一登壇黃素三盟逆刺付授儀, ZHDZ 8: 376-7.

[78] See EOT *chushen* 出神, 283-4.

[79] "在「出官」誦請諸神時已經將五營將固定化."Lǐ 2003:564.

[80] 無上黃籙大齋立成儀 j. 17, 22, 56,

[81] 靈寶領教濟度金書 DZ 466 TC 1033-36 ZHDZ 39 上, 40 中, 41 下. Instances of this system in long Exteriorization of Officials sequences and altar systems appear in j. 142, 188, 286.

[82] DFHY 181 上清五元玉冊九靈飛步章奏祕法 三, 玉機玄格.

hierarchy of spirit-officials bestowed upon the body of the priest through ordination, and which are then externalized during ritual. These pentadic symbols of Daoist Canon texts are in some ways like the late imperial Five Camps in that from a Daoist perspective, they stand near the bottom (or sometimes buried in the middle) of a very long descending hierarchy of deities and ranked generals. But in these Daoist Canon sources, as ritual and textual elements these particular symbols of a five-directional army (or lords 君, etc.) are notable for their relative unimportance. They occupy minor spots in in a towering pantheon, and account for only a tiny sliver of text amid very long rosters of military and civil officials, which, in these texts, are all seen as gods of residing within the body of the Daoist initiate. In this we are still far from an independent cult of village-protecting armies worshipped in temples and their own small shrines, foregrounded in ritual and text as one of the main elements of Tantric-Popular Ritual Method. Thus, how these symbols evolved into the modern Five Camps cannot be determined entirely from these rites for the Externalization of Officials.

Clues to this question appear in two major Sòng era texts, the *Wúshàng Xúanyuán Yùtáng Dàfǎ* 無上玄元三天玉堂大法,[83]and the *Tàishàng Jìdù Zhāngshè* 太上濟度章赦.[84] As Andersen has shown,[85] the *Yùtáng Dàfǎ* claims to be the inner method of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, and like the Tiānxīn revelations shares its origins in the "discovery" of buried texts, a process aided or engendered through spirit-mediumship and spirit-writing. The author (or editor) of the *Yùtáng Dàfǎ*, the widely-active 12th century Daoist Lù Shízhōng 路時中, claimed that the first 24 chapters 卷 of this text were lost scriptures of Zhāng Dàolíng buried on Màoshān 茅山, and which visions

[83]無上玄元三天玉堂大法, DZ 220, TC 1070-73, ZHDZ 30:387-506.
[84] 太上濟度章赦 DZ 316 TC 1036-7 ZHDZ 8:709-732.
[85] TC: 1070-73.

from Zhāng Dàolíng's disciple Zhào Shēng 趙昇 had led him to discover.[86] The final chapters contain revelations of spirit-writing ascribed to a deity whose name, like that of most Daoist gods is actually a title: the Celestial Worthy, Grand Master of the Teaching 大教主天尊. Thus, as an extension or elaboration of the Tiānxiīn tradition, the *Yùtáng Dàfǎ* represents a major work of Ritual Method Daoism, in which exorcistic Ritual Method innovations have become reinterpreted within a more traditional Daoist framework of inner cultivation.

John Lagerwey has determined that the *Jìdù Zhāngshè* is in fact the collected memorials and writs that are missing from but mentioned in the major 12th C. ritual compendium the *Língbǎo Língjiào Jìdù Jīnshū* 靈寶領教濟度金書.[87] This large compendium likewise represents a major attempt to integrate the exorcistic symbolism and techniques of Ritual Method Daoism within a classical framework of Daoist ritual. In both the *Yùtáng Dàfǎ* and the *Jìdù Jīnshū*, the passages relevant to the changing role of these five directional symbols are preserved in memorials featuring written invocations and commands for a range of spirits, and in both cases the purpose is the same: the exorcistic healing of epidemic diseases. Unlike other Táng-Sòng-era texts, in these two memorials this set of directional ethno-numeric armies have been detached from the larger systems to which they were formerly embedded, and are given prominent placement toward the beginning of the texts, while articulation of their symbolism occupies a relatively larger portion of the texts themselves.

The *Yùtáng Dàfa* writ, entitled the "Celestial Master Grand Petition to Cut-off Epidemic" 天師斷瘟大章,[88] begins by invoking a particular arrangement of these directional ethno-numeric

[86] Andersen, *Wushang Sanyuan santian yutang dafa*, TC 1070-1073.
[87] TC 1036-7.
[88] Yùtáng Dàfǎ j. 24 天師斷瘟大章, ZHDZ 30:476.

symbols, each with 1200 men 人. This invocation comes near the beginning of the text, right after the briefest invocation of high stellar administrators and a general statement of purpose: to seize the epidemic demons within the precinct. Of the nine or so lines invoking spirits (by enumeration) here, the first three are given to invoking the Nine Yí 九夷 and the rest of the five directional series. Interestingly the text continues by invoking generals and soldiers of the Five Departments 五部, which the instructions and other texts indicate are the ghosts subdued and converted by Celestial Master Zhāng.[89] These are followed by local protector spirits of the city and home, and ultimately "all the correct spirits of the community precinct" 又請當境社稷一切正神." These local deities are then commanded to respond to the invocation, descend into the precinct, and be deputized by Daoist authorization and join with the celestial officers in seizing and expelling epidemic demons. The memorial concludes with a final command cast in an image that typifies the language and imagination of the greater Ritual Method movement:

> The Seven Sons of the Yellow Slave, the King of Seasonal Diseases, the Ghosts of the Five Epidemics of the Five Directions, I order [you generals and spirits] to crush them, render them unto dust, and send them away ten thousand leagues, none may linger hidden to spread disease-poison and unjustly harm the good people! May the nation and precinct be at peace!
> 黃奴七子，歲分病王，五方五瘟疫癘之鬼，悉令摧崩瓦解塵走萬里. 不得潛蹤放毒枉害良民。國境安寧...[90]

[89] On these ghosts of the Five Departments, see my discussion of how Celestial Master Zhāng became an exorcist, in the discussion of prototypical Ancestral Masters.

[90] The *Yùtáng Dàfǎ* 天師斷瘟大章 text reads: 謹為某人請降星君官吏一百二十人，治主丁宮收捕境內瘟疫之鬼，欲相連染習者斷絕消滅。又請東方九夷君一十二人，南方八蠻君一十二人，西方六戎君一十二人，北方五狄君一十二人，中央三秦君一十二人，五部官將各千二百人，五部兵士各三十萬人，及某城邑守宅將軍二十四人，官將兵士三千萬人，一合應章來下於境土之內，部封之中，四面八方，拒捍攻擊，嚴加營護，誅斬捉獲。又請當境社稷一切正神，常所祭奠，與民祈福者，與上件天官將吏布列，相應同心，併力禦備，收捕行疫癘之鬼，欲殺害天民者。上張天羅，遮掩飛行鬼祟為患者。下布地網，撈漉泉源江河水陸潛形匿影密害於人者。一切捉獲，驅斥史公業。黃奴七子，歲分病王，五方五瘟疫癘之鬼，悉令摧崩瓦解塵走萬里，不得潛蹤放毒枉害良民。國境安寧，以為效驗云云如常式。

The relevant memorial in the *Jìdù Zhāngshè*, entitled "Petition to Dispatch [generals and officials] for [expelling] Epidemic and Protecting [against] Disease" 遣疫癘保病章[91], is somewhat longer and uses far more formal language than the *Yùtáng Dàfǎ* text. But after a terse, plaintiff preamble, the invocation of spirits begins with a certain Nine Yí Lord of the Northern Imperial Gate 北闕九夷君 at the head of four lines or so of various celestial lords, generals, and armies, before invoking the lords 君 of the Nine Yí, Eight Mán and so on. Here, these five symbols lead rather distinctive numbers of Official Lords 官君, all interspersed with ritual commands to cut off directional plague-pneumas: "May the Nine Yí Lord of the east and his 81 Official Lords cut off the humors of the green epidemic's green disease-poison..." 東方九夷君八十一官君斷青瘟青毒之炁 and so on.[92] Like the Yùtáng *Dàfǎ* text, these five-directional deities are again followed by still more generals and armies, and after lists of names the textual summons ends with a call for local gods to join with the deities summoned in the invocation:

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[91] 太上濟度章赦, 卷上，遣疫癘保病章, ZHDZ 30:710.

[92] 太上濟度章赦,卷上,官七,章一, 遣疫癘保病章遣疫癘保病章　　ZHDZ 8:710-1. Scripta Sinica text:
臣濫膺選舉冒綴班聯蹇淺自慚希夷未悟扣宸閽而屢請靦靈府以知非亶冀隆慈曲垂涵貸臣謹據齋意臣切念齋主某人塵寰涉跡身世謀生五慾七情寧無翳累百非眾慝易積愆尤致寒暑燥濕之憑凌乘身命運限之屯滯忽沾疫炁遂履危機自非帝造之垂矜曷俾餘生之有慶謹為拜章一通上聞三天伏望盛德涵容玄恩矜恤特降玉清道炁靈寶妙光灌注某人身家之中俾正炁輝明妖氛遠離消災解厄保命延生臣謹為上請北闕九夷君北黑天機君運炁解厄君地官督炁君各五人官將各一百二十人北城化吏五人天市大夫一人五瘟部炁兵四十萬人拒天大兵千萬人主收制疫毒斷除瘟炁東方九夷君八十一官君斷青瘟青毒之炁南方八蠻君六十四官君斷赤瘟赤毒之炁西方六戎君三十六官君斷白瘟白毒之炁北方五狄君二十五官君斷黑瘟黑毒之炁中央三秦君一十二官君斷黃瘟黃毒之炁大胡老君家中守宅三將軍左右三部將軍赤陽兵士運炁解厄君五瘟都炁君吏兵各三十萬人與里社井邑君主同心收除斬制疫鬼中宮遊邏大將軍科車武騎大將軍鋒火虎賁大將軍監天敢健大將軍遨遮大將軍鋒火大將軍驍騎大將軍斬斷虎賁大將軍羅網龍虎大將軍討捕飛行大將軍吞天絕地大將軍各一人吏兵七十萬人主收斷五瘟積類無侵鄰里搖天動地兵十萬人討天君胡越騎君陰陽神決吏收炁食炁吏收神食神吏收鬼食鬼吏收毒食毒吏各一人執赤越大胡君千二百人三五元命功曹使者魁罡擊刺將軍各一十五人金剛八煞兵士各九十六人主收捕瘟鬼掃蕩疫炁免相侵染貽禍鄉閭即俾某毒炁消除病源康復天醫扶體靈藥資身家門尊卑均臻景貺.

> [...and] the Lord of the Five Plague Capitoline Pneumas, with bailiffs and soldiers each totaling three-hundred thousand men, together with the village Earth God and Lord of the City and Wells with one mind uproot and cut off the ghosts of disease!
> 五瘟都炁君, 吏兵各三十萬人與里社井邑君主同心收除斬制疫鬼.[93]

Several important points can be made about these texts. First, when compared with other major Táng and Sòng compendia, here these directional symbols have been extracted from relative obscurity, buried within long lists of bureaucratic and body-related spirits, and are instead foregrounded in both the text and the ritual action it seeks to enact. Furthermore, in these memorials the directional armies appear to be fully externalized in the sense of being seen not as spirits projected from the adept's body but rather as independently existing entities to be summoned down into to the altar-space, just like other local gods. This is all the more noteworthy because the encyclopedic *Língjiào Jìdù Jīnshū* to which the *Jìdù Zhāngshè* refers does indeed feature one other memorial 章 listing the Nine Yí and company as internal spirits of the body.[94] Several other major Sòng compilations likewise continue the inclusion of these directional armies as part of a formal Externalization of Officials practice.[95] Some of these same compendia also present these five much as they appear in older sources –as a token part within a vast altar-system line-up, buried far down in a grandiose hierarchy of ranked officials and generals.[96] Thus, these particular texts have given these five-fold symbols a newfound prominence entirely absent in texts where they appear as part of an Exteriorization of Officials rite or its corresponding register.

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[93] 與里社井邑君主同心收除斬制疫鬼. ZHDZ 30:710.
[94] E.g. j. 261, 開山通道返魂更生朱章.
[95] E.g. 太上黃籙齋儀，卷 1 發爐，卷 44 安宅行方懺；無上黃籙大齋立成儀，卷 17 出官啟事，卷 22 各稱法位；
[96] 無上黃籙大齋立成儀, 卷 56 右三班.

While clearly both memorials would have been read or presented after a separate invocation of some particular altar-system, regardless of the number and nature of spirits invoked beforehand, the specific purpose of this particular ritual falls to this compact and fairly humble pentad, meaning that they were specifically selected for the role. In other words, the newfound prominence of these five symbols appears to be directly linked to the purpose of expelling plague. Furthermore, in their execution of this plague-expelling function, these gods are seen as belonging to a class of divinity which in the *Yùtáng Dàfǎ* version borders on a category of subdued ghosts (the Five Departments 五部), and which in general renders them well-suited to coordination with the local spirits mentioned in the text.

The significance of plague-expulsion in this overall ritual, textual, and historic context is underscored when we recall that the only time where these directional symbols appear anywhere in the modern Táinán-area Língbǎo system –and not as part of a Red-Headed rite– is in the climactic Pacification of Plague 和瘟 (hé wēn) sequence that forms the major ritual consummation of the plague-expelling Royal Jiào 王醮 (wáng jiào). The Táinán Língbǎo Pacification of Plague features a substantial expansion of the ethno-numeric scheme, and is no mere appropriation of the Minor Rite text.[97] If the expulsion of plague forms a common theme linking these symbols in Sòng-era Ritual Method texts and the modern Língbǎo Grand Rite, then it is all the more revealing that we find these same pentadic symbols invoked for plague-expelling purposes in some of the earliest sources for this symbol-cluster: the aforementioned *Chì Sòngzi Zhāng Lì* 赤松子章歷, the *Zhèngyī Fǎwén Jīngzhāng Guānpǐn* 正一法文經章官品, a text which Cedzich notes for its purely

[97] Ōfuchi 386-388.

popular orientation,[98] and the medieval apocalyptic scripture, the *Tàishàng Dòngyuán Shénzhōu Jīng* 太上洞淵神咒經, a text clearly composed through mediumistic revelation or spirit-writing.[99]

Of these it is the *Chì Sòngzi Zhānglì* (*The Memorial Almanac of Master Red Pine*) which is of greatest interest here, as we find material that was clearly the source for the Sòng memorials examined above. In one petition for averting a wide range of misfortunes and prolonging life, after summoning a series of officials and generals, the petition ends with an extended invocation of these five-directional symbols, each directed to eliminate the misfortunes 厄, plagues 瘟, poisons 毒, and "killers" 殺 of each color-coded direction. [100] At the very end, in language very similar to the Sòng texts quoted above, this medieval (possibly Táng-era) *Chì Sòngzǐ* petition ends with a final, summarizing command:

> [All those who] spread seasonal epidemics and disasters of water and fire, I order that they all be completely destroyed, and that the local Earth God and Lords of the Village and City with one mind join forces [with the spirits invoked herein] and assist in protecting the home and family of this disciple so-and-so...
> 時行瘴癘水火之災皆令消滅及社里邑君同心併力加備守護弟子某家[101]

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[98] In TC 133-4 Cedzich notes this source mentions "many aspects of peasant life in early medieval China. Elements that can be related to the life of the gentry or literati are notably absent."

[99] Several writs from the Chì Sòngzi Zhānglì specifically invoke these directional symbols to eliminate their corresponding directional plagues:
赤松子章曆, 卷三, 禳災卻禍延年拔命卻殺都章
赤松子章曆, 卷之三　豈三 / 扶衰度厄保護章
赤松子章曆, 卷之六, 遷臨大官章
Two other early sources generally invoke these symbols or elements thereof in connection with expelling plague: DZ 1218 正一法文經章官品 , 卷之一, 五瘟傷寒; 太上洞淵神咒經, 卷之十四, 殺鬼步頌品. It is tempting to see a link between these symbols of the proto-Five Camps and the Five Plague Emissaries, but even where these are mentioned in the

[100] 赤松子章曆, 卷三, 禳災卻禍延年拔命卻殺都章, ZHDZ 8:644-5.

[101] Ibid. This last third or so of the document reads: 又重請東方九夷君九九八十一官君寅卯辰甲乙君為弟子某解除東方青災青厄青瘟青毒青疰青殺又請南方八蠻君八八六十四官君巳午未丙丁君為弟子某解除南方赤災赤厄赤瘟赤毒赤疰赤殺又請西方六戎君六六三十六官君申酉戌庚辛君為弟子某解除西方白災白厄白瘟白毒白疰白殺又請北方五狄君五五二十五官君亥子丑壬癸君為弟子某解除北方黑災黑厄黑瘟黑毒黑疰黑殺又請中央三秦戊己君千二百官君為弟子某解除中央黃災黃厄黃瘟黃毒黃疰黃殺并為辟斥

A similar memorial in the same third juàn of this text likewise invokes these directional ethno-numeric symbols in much the same way, in which they are again commanded to eliminate a series of directional, color-coded misfortunes, including epidemics 瘟.[102] Some *Chì Sòngzi* memorials give these directional guardians other missions as well, in one case to protect a client's home and domestic animals from tigers,[103] to help remove curses put upon someone by various means including "carving their name or making a figure [in their] shape and stabbing it in the heart with a knife, or by cutting off hair and severing fingers while making declarations to the god of the local temple."[104]

Several other *Chì Sòngzi* memorials summon these directional Lords and then command them take up positions around clients' homes and bodies. One orders them to "surround and protect the residence of so-and-so, to press close on the left and right,"[105] while another orders such personal protection specifically for exorcistic protection against "epidemic demons bandits":

> I summon the Eastern Nine Yí Lord, the Southern Eight Mán Lord, the Western Six Róng Lord, the Northern Five Dí –each twenty men, and again summon Lord Thousand-leagues and General Ten-thousand-leagues, General Blessing and Protection, [may you] all together make camp and guard so-and-so, follow his person and cover his dwelling, and make it that he is ever secure and stable, avoid and cut-off the manifold disasters and epidemic demon bandits.

五方黃病之鬼時行瘴癘水火之災皆令消滅及社里邑君同心併力加備守護弟子某家...Scripta Sinica text, ZHDZ 8:645.

[102]赤松子章曆, 卷三, 扶衰度厄保護章, ZHDZ 8:648-9.

[103]赤松子章曆, 卷三, 收除虎災章: [...]請九夷八蠻六戎五狄三秦君各隨方位春夏秋冬與某家宅三將軍二十四吏兵士三十萬人勤加營護一切眾生並令掃蕩願州縣某家男女大小牛馬六畜行來出入不逢虎狼眾災之難毒害不過此境. ZHDZ 8:643.

[104]赤松子章曆, 卷三, 解咒詛章: [...]或題刻姓名或畫作形影或以刀刺心或割髮截指將告神社...或被惡人畫作形像及刀刺心或道上神社壇場牢獄樹木神靈井灶之中或與河伯水官俗中邪師私有鬼神之處[...] Scripta Sinica text.

[105]赤松子章曆, 卷六, 遷臨大官章（excerpt):「謹請東九夷南八蠻西六戎北五狄君各十二人將吏兵士及時下圍繞某所住宅俠從左右」.

請東方九夷君南方八蠻君西方六戎君北方五狄君各十二人。重請千里君萬里將軍祐護將軍共營衛某身隨逐覆蓋所在之處,常令安穩辟斥眾災疫癘鬼賊。[106]

Thus, in addition to the strong connection with controlling plague, several of these *Chì Sòngzi* memorials describe these pentadic symbols as being spiritually deployed in space, an encircling protection force "camped" around the body and home of a client. It is worth mentioning that while here these officials, generals and lords are not called forth in an Externalization of Officials technique, they may have still been understood as spirits bestowed upon the body of the Daoist adept through ordination.

Regardless of whether medieval Daoists regarded these directional Officials and Official Lords as independent, external spirits or an endowment of their ordination, the Zhèngyī tradition clearly understood them as being specifically linked with controlling epidemics, among other misfortunes. This same association is made by the medieval apocalypse, the *Tàishàng Dòngyuán Shénzhòu Jīng* 太上洞淵神咒經, a scripture produced through mediumistic communication and often delivered, as here, in the form of a recorded pronouncement of the Way spoken through spiritual intermediaries.[107] In one passage, "the Dao spoke" through a being called the Real Man Míngluó 明羅真人, saying how if virtuous people were to meet with danger they could summon a series of deities presented in what appears to be an intact invocation liturgy simply inserted into this scripture and preached by the personified Dào. In this section the Real Man Míngluó pronounces invocations like a Daoist Priest, saying:

> From on high [I] summon the Five Emperors, sprit-immortals, soldiers and horses, descend into the altar-space and seize demonic bandits. Green Emperor of the East, Lord of the Nine Yí, Green Spirit General, ninety billion, nine-hundred eighty-one

[106]赤松子章曆, 卷六, 保護戎征章.

[107]太上洞淵神咒經, DZ 1218, TC 269-272, ZHDZ 30:1-83.

> million men, Spirit-Immortals of the eastern village and all Spirit-Officials, together descend and seize the eastern demons of the green epidemic wood [element] spirit...
> 上請五帝神仙兵馬降至道場搜擒鬼賊。東方青帝九夷君青神將軍九九八十一萬人,東鄉神仙諸靈官,一合來下收捉東方青瘟木精之鬼...[108]

And so the formula repeats with each direction in appropriate color, elemental, and numerical symbolism. Each time the text specifically commands these generals and officials to seize the epidemic demons of their corresponding direction. Interestingly, in this *Shénzhòu Jīng* invocation, epidemic is the only affliction which these spirits are directed to address.

Hence from these two medieval Daoist texts to the Sòng era Ritual Method memorials cited above, and even in the modern Língbǎo Pacification of Epidemic liturgy, this group of pentadic symbols have carried a specific association with combatting epidemic disease.[109] Furthermore, the two Sòng-era memorials cited above both employ specific language commanding local spirits to join forces with the Daoists' protector-deities, language that is clearly derived from or related to one of the *Chì Sòngzi Zhānglì* memorials examined above.[110] As we have

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[108] 太上洞淵神咒經, 卷 14 殺鬼步頌品 ZHDZ 30:52.

[109] It is tempting to suspect a relationship between these plague-fighting proto-Five Camps and the Five Plagues, be they the Five Plague Emissaries 五瘟使 or Five Plague Demons 五瘟鬼, but DZ sources do not offer evidence of direct correspondence or correlation between these two pentadic groups. Even in texts where variants of both symbol-groups appear, including several cited above, these generally antagonistic pentads are not directly connected, correlated or juxtaposed in the text. See: 太上洞神三皇傳授儀　笙十一; 正一法文經章官品 卷一, 五瘟傷寒; 太上洞淵神咒經, 卷十四, 殺鬼步頌品; 太上濟度章赦卷上, 遣疫癘保病章; 無上玄元三天玉堂大法, 卷二十四, 斷瘟法, 天師斷瘟大章, ZHDZ 30:476.

[110] 赤松子章曆, 卷三, 禳災卻禍延年拔命卻殺都章 ZHDZ 8:645:

> [...]請中央三秦戊巳君千二百官君為弟子某解除中央黃災黃厄黃瘟黃毒黃疰黃殺并為辟斥五方黃病之鬼時行癘癘水火之災皆令消滅及社里邑君同心併力加備守護弟子某家福祿[...]

無上玄元三天玉堂大法, j. 24,　延生度厄品, 斷瘟法, 天師斷瘟大章 ZHDZ 30:476:[...]又請當境社稷一切正神常所祭奠與民祈福者與上件天官將吏布列相應同心併力禦備收捕行疫癘之鬼欲殺害天民者[...]

太上濟度章赦, 卷上, 官七, 章一, 遣疫癘保病章 ZHDZ 8:710

> [...]五瘟都炁君吏兵各三十萬人與里社井邑君主同心收除斬制疫鬼[...]

seen, other petitions in the *Chì Sòngzi* had already articulated these pentadic symbols as a spatial protection force able to encircle and defend someone's home. Thus, even as medieval Zhèngyī and Língbǎo texts incorporated these pentadic symbols into complex hierarchies and elaborate Externalization of Officials techniques, the sources examined here suggest that by the late Táng if not earlier, there was a more basic level of interpretation that featured these symbols as exorcistic agents that specialized in protection against plague and other afflictions. The Sòng memorials cited above reflect this older interpretation, with ritual purposes and language which closely echoes the *Chì Sòngzi* petition for averting plague and other afflictions.

From these Daoist Canon sources, and in lieu of others, it is impossible to tell whether this five-directional symbol-cluster enjoyed some other, independent presence outside these Daoist contexts, by which the eventual appearance of these textual elements in Ritual Master sources might represent a long continuity within popular culture. Whatever the case, the association of association of these five-directional ethno-numeric symbols with the Five Camps does not occur in canonical Daoist sources,[111] but rather is only found in the liturgical materials of Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters, and in temple installations such as the bamboo talismans for the Five Camps,

[111] The phrase "Five Camps" 五營 does appear in a small number of canonical Daoist texts, primarily in Externalization of Officials procedures and corresponding registers, in each case invoking military officers 校尉 (etc.) of the Five Camps of the Central Palace 中宮五營. The directional ethno-numeric symbols under discussion here do not appear in the sections of text where this phrase, Five Camps of the Central Palace, appears, though there are other, five-directional armies and sporadic, directional camps (前帝東營大兵, ZHDZ 8:478), but no systematic language of five directional camps per se. See 太上三五正一盟威籙 j.5, 太上正一九天兵符籙品第十五, ZHDZ 8:421; 太上正一閱籙儀, ZHDZ 8:483; 太上三五正一盟威閱籙醮儀, ZHDZ 8:478; 靈寶領教濟度金書 j.12, 科儀立成品, 一祈禳開度通用, 九靈飛步上章儀, 請稱法位; 太上濟度章赦, 卷上, 諸章官式, 除顛邪; DFHY 240 正一玄壇元帥六陰草野舞袖雷法, 役邪鬼法. This DFHY text depicts directional camps of "Fierce Tiger Troops" 虎猲兵 which are summoned from the five directions and commanded to enter the Ritual Master's body and establish camps (ZHDZ 38:352). This lone DFHY appearance of the term "Five Camps" represents a significant development away from the earlier contexts of the term, and while still internalized, are symbolically closer to the more familiar Five Camps of Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters. Nevertheless, this text does not link the Five Camps with the ethno-numeric scheme.

which often feature these same ethno-numeric correspondences. But in light of the available evidence, it appears that the identification of the Five Camps with these ethno-numeric symbols was a development by Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters who obtained elements from Daoist texts and ritual performance. Given the durability of this symbolic cluster, though its repetitive, formulaic character lends itself to oral performance, it seems likely there was a textual basis for its transmission into Ritual Master traditions, just as texts (and written talismans, command flags, etc.) continue to be the main vehicle for transmitting this symbolic motif in the modern Minor Rite. If it was by virtue of Daoist texts that Ritual Masters came to adopt these elements, then these particular memorials in the *Chì Sòngzi Zhānglì* and *Yùtáng Dàfǎ* in particular were well positioned to play such a role in transmitting these practical symbolic systems into more popular ritual contexts.[112]

The Nine-Phoenix, Destroyer of Filth 九鳳破穢

In the opening moments of the modern Língbǎo Jiào performed in southern Táiwān, the first deity invoked –not once but repeatedly in a series of formula– is the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth. The fourth such formula pronounced in the opening minutes of the Announcement of the Memorial 發表 is an invocation of the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth recited while burning a talisman of the Nine-Phoenix into the purification water which will be used throughout the rite to purify the altar-space. This same invocation (Ōfuchi 244), and the one following it in the High Priest's manual have been adopted by Ritual Masters of the Black-Head Minor Rite tradition-

[112] Let us note that these symbols are conspicuous by their absence in the major Ritual Method compendia such as the *Fàhǎi Yìzhū*, where this symbol-set does not appear; there is only one appearance in the DFHY (181), as a a fully prototypical Externalization of Officials exercise. See 上清五元玉冊九靈飛步章奏祕法, 三章官第三, 玉機玄格, ZHDZ 38:36-38.

group for the same purpose, and thus the same formula –though curiously having dropped the two characters "Nine-Phoenix" in all regional sources– likewise commences most Black-Head Minor Rite ceremony in Táinán.[113] In the Xújiǎ 徐甲 Minor Rite tradition-group, the talisman of purification burned in synchrony with the commencement of ritual features a slightly rearranged written version of this same formula (神水破穢清明), also lacking the two characters "Nine-Phoenix." But the same tradition's liturgy for the Kāi-guāng 開光 rite to animate spirit-images opens by invoking General Nine-Phoenix, Destroyer of Filth 九鳳破穢將軍. Likewise, most Minor Rite altars of the Pénghú tradition-group burn a talisman of the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth into the cup of talisman-water in the preliminary stage of their standard ritual program. In the Sān-Nǎi lineage-group 三奶派 text published by Ōfuchi,[114] a prime example of a pure Daoist-brand Ritual Method text originating from Pǔtián 莆田 (in central-eastern Fújiàn) and devoid of any detectable hybridity despite contingent association with a Sān-Nǎi lineage, the initial "Purification of the Altar" 淨壇 section also repeatedly invokes the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth by a number of different titles, amid a series of classic Ritual Method-style invocations, and following a pantheon headed by Pǔhuà Tiānzūn, Celestial Master Zhāng, Tiānpéng, and

[113] In Ānpíng Minor Rite altars, which are but with one exception likewise of this same Black-Head tradition group, this formula is preserved in their ritual manuals also lacking the two characters "Nine-Phoenix," but as ritual in Ānpíng Minor Rite ceremony is commenced by the procedure of "Opening the Whip" 開鞭 rather than banging the Ritual Gavel and burning the Incense-burner Talisman, this formula is only used in larger rites like the Grand Rewarding of the Troops 大犒賞. Nevertheless, the widespread distribution of this clipped version confirms that the change to this formula happened at an early stage in the formation and/or transmission of this tradition to Táinán, probably from Tóngān or possibly via Xiàmén, as the elevation of Bǎoshēng Dàdì to the central position as a Lord-of-the-Rite in numerous ritual formula reflects direct linkage with the cult of Bǎoshēng Dàdì, and his symbolic association with the central of the Five Camps is confirmed by Dean (1988:110). Hence these particular opening formula, though taken straight from Daoist priests' manuals, may, like the Daoist's liturgical materials, predate transmission to Táiwān.

[114] Ōfuchi, 《中國人の宗教儀禮》, 786-799.

Xuántiān Shàngdì. In the Lǘshān altars of Jiànyáng and Lóngyán, though the Nine-Phoenix appears less prominent than in these coastal traditions (as it would to a certain extent in the Táinán-area traditions were we to lack the High Priest's manual, and the Minor Rite Ritual Masters' "secret" invocations and talismans), formula and at least one talisman of the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth are used in healing rites of both regions.[115]

Hence by the late imperial period, when these liturgical traditions took their present form, and particularly in the influential coastal regions of Fújiàn, the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth had become the main symbol associated of ritual purification. As purification is the primary ritual act, symbols, formula, and talismans of the Nine-Phoenix are with great consistency deployed at the leading edge of ritual performance, where the opening of sacred time and space is synonymous with expulsion of the impure traces of death from the ritual arena. While Sòng-Yuán compendia such as the *Língbǎo Lǐngjiào Jìdù Jīnshū* 靈寶領教濟度金書 and *Língbǎo Yùjiàn* 靈寶玉鑑, among others, clearly magnified the importance of this symbol, the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth began as a Zhèngyī register, and evolved into an independent figure that would become categorized within the domain of Ritual Method symbols in Daoist pantheons, as evidenced by both the *Wúshàng Huánglù Dàzhāi Lìchéng Yí* 無上黃籙大齋立成儀 and Táinán-area Língbǎo liturgical texts.

In the *Tàishàng Sānwǔ Zhèngyī Mèngwēi Lù* 太上三五正一盟威籙, arguably the oldest text of Zhèngyī registers despite later redactions,[116] twelfth of the twenty-four registers is that of

[115] See *Jiànyáng* 102 and 795, 798; *Guǎngjì Tán* 2:465. Remarkably the talisman used in these two regions is very similar, again underscoring the linkages among these "upland" Fujianese Lǘshān traditions.
[116] The surviving text is a Sòng redaction as revealed by a Sòng-era administrative unit (TC 971), but its details conform to other Táng-era sources. Editors of the ZHDZ likewise note the "Sòng-era place-name," but regard

"Supreme Orthodox Unity Register of the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth" 太上正一九鳳破穢籙, which is associated with water (among other calendrical and astro-geographic correspondences), and carries a regiment of various filth-eliminating "Official Generals" 官將 (in squads of twenty men), including an array of five-directional removers-of-filth, reminiscent of similar language in the so-called Sān-Nǎi liturgy from Pǔtián mentioned above.[117]

Most of these Zhèngyī registers involve highly martial, exorcistic language, and in the rites of "Exteriorizing Officials" 出官 detailed in Táng texts such as the *Tàishàng Sānwǔ Zhèngyī Mèngwēi Lù Jiàoyí* 太上三五正一盟威閱籙醮儀 and the *Tàishàng Zhèngyī Yùelù Yí* 太上正一閱籙儀, the regiments of subordinate generals, soldiers and lictors attached to each register are directed to expel, seize, or slay various classes of malevolent spirits. But in both of these texts, the generals and underlings of the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth are specifically instructed to assist the initiate and "sweep away all unregistered, perverse (heterodox) deities" 為臣滌蕩不係籍之邪神.[118] In what may be an important distinction, where the generals, soldiers and bailiffs of other registers are primarily commanded to subdue various environmental spirits ("ferocious perverse [entities], and all spiritual hauntings" 凶邪，一切精祟; "restrain and slay the mountain and water demons in people's bodies and in the world, that they bring no harm to people" 收斬身中及天下

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this as a later addition, and conclude the text was produced in the Nán-běi Cháo (420-589 CE) and represents "the ritual registers of early Celestial Master Daoism" 係早期天師道法籙(ZHDZ 8:393).

[117] Ōfuchi,中國人の宗教儀禮》， 790. I emphasize 'so-called Sān-Nǎi' because this liturgy has no Sān-Nǎi content whatsoever, but is rather a fine example of a pure Daoist-brand Ritual Method liturgical text. For specifically Sān-Nǎi liturgical texts see the collections recently published by Liú Zhīwàn, 《台灣法教：閭山教の科儀本と符式簿の解讀》(東京：風響社, 2019).

[118] 太上三五正一盟威閱籙醮儀, ZHDZ 8:477. In the *Tàishàng Zhèngyī Yùelù Yí* 太上正一閱籙儀, the entire passage reads 謹出太上正一九鳳破穢籙，籙中天靈赤官，斬邪功曹，誅邪攝邪破邪伐邪擊邪截邪翦邪滅邪禽奇將軍使者，玉童玉女，等為臣滌蕩不係籍之神，皆令滅除。(ZHDZ 8:482).

魑魅魍魉無害於人),[119] those of the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth are specifically directed against "unregistered" deities.[120] While one other register (太上正一混沌元命赤籙) does target "blood-eating, roving ghosts which attack people"血食浮遊侵人之鬼,[121] a clear reference to spirits of the dead offered cultic sacrifice, the specific language of the Nine-Phoenix register singling out heterodox deities indicates a particular association with the exorcistic war on local gods, and moreover suggests an early conception of local deities gaining legitimacy through proper "registry" with the Daoist celestial bureaucracy.

In its most basic outlines, the modern role given the Nine-Phoenix can be traced to what is probably a late Táng or early Sòng text of Zhèngyī exorcism, the *Zhèngyī Fǎwén Xiūzhēn Zhǐyào* 正一法文修真旨要,[122] in a healing rite which Strickmann has examined as an exemplar of the Daoist use of seals in such healing rites.[123] Whether this text dates to the 6th C., as Strickmann believed, or to the Táng-Sòng transition, its various methods of exorcistic healing are notably unencumbered by any rites of petitioning or repentance on part of the patient, but rather rely on ritual commands and visualizations, operations made potent no doubt by the techniques of qì-cultivation likewise outlined in the short text. In the healing rite in question, the exorcist is, like his later counterparts in Daoist ceremony, to hold the cup of talisman water in his left hand, a sword in his right (but not yet, at this pre-Ritual Method stage, with disheveled hair or bare feet), and is

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[119] ZHDZ 8:482.
[120] Kleeman points to similar language in the *Tàishàng Dòngyuán Shénzhòu Jīng*, where "[t]he beings that cause evil in the world do not do so because it is in their basic nature but rather because higher demons in service to the Daoist Heavens fail to control them. They are characterized as "demons who have escaped from the rosters" (*tuoji zhi gui* 脱籍之鬼)." *Celestial Masters*, 185.
[121] ZHDZ 8:482.
[122] DZ 1270, ZHDZ 8:355-361, TC 488.
[123] Strikmann, *Magical Medicine* 124-8. Strickmann, like the ZHDZ editors, takes this to be "A Sixth-Century Taoist Text," with the ZHDZ further characterizing it as an "early scripture of the Way of the Celestial Master." (ZHDZ 8:355). Schipper, however, in TC 488 dates it to the Táng, but without specific arguments for this date.

then to visualize before his face "a perfected official in red robes, nineteen feet tall," and "wearing on his head the Nine-Phoenix Cap from the register." After spraying the patient with talisman water, and further visualizing the seven stars of the dipper "over one's head" and the Polar-constellation 罡 in the cup of talisman water, the priest is to recite a formula:

> I reverently summon the essence of the Seven Stars of the Dipper, descend into this water, the ghosts of a hundred afflictions, swiftly depart ten-thousand leagues, those who do not depart will be executed, and handed over to the White Lad of the West, swiftly, swiftly as the law commands![124]
> 謹請北斗七星之精，降此水中，百殃之鬼速去萬里，不去斬死，付西方白童子。急急如律。

While augmented by later developments, including elaboration of the here but terse allusion to the Nine-Phoenix, the association between the Nine-Phoenix and this exact invocation will come to form one of the most enduring continuities in Daoist ritual to the present day, and become a structurally-embedded element of the ritual performed by Táinán-area Língbǎo Daoists and Ritual Masters of the Black-head Minor Rite tradition-group. But it is Sòng-era developments that establish these modern conventions, developments presaged by the reworking of this material in the *Yúnjí Qīqiān*, where this invocation is to be recited while drawing a talisman consisting of the characters "Divine Water, Bright-and-Clear" 神水清明.[125] This four-character talismanic formula will eventually be developed into the Nine-Phoenix invocation used in tandem with the formula calling down the "essence of the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper" in modern Daoist and Minor Rite ceremony.

[124] ZHDZ 8:360.
[125] *Yúnjí Qīqiān* j.45, ZHDZ 26:372-3.

While these associated formula began in the context of healing rites, their establishment as standard elements in opening ritual performance is, evidently, a legacy of the 12th C. *Yùtáng Dàfǎ*, where in chapter 24 it states: "In all cases, when purifying all altars and removing impurity, use this talisman," the same "Divine Water, Bright-and-Clear" 神水清明 talisman given in the *Yúnjí Qīqiān*, though with what appears to be a stylized "shà" 煞 added to the base, a common motif in many talismans. Here the instructions direct the adept to "first transform one's spirit into a Realized Man" and then "visualize the Nine-Phoenix at one's head." Following other visualizations and a mantra of demonic names, the Ritual Master is to recite the same invocation of the "essence of the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper."[126] Then among the final pages of the *Yùtáng Dàfǎ*, in a section on the construction of the altar-space with talismanic banners, the text again presents a "Purification of Filth Nine-Phoenix Talisman" 淨穢九鳳符, with the same visualization of the Nine-Phoenix over the priest's head, here depicted by a diagram. And following a more elaborate (and cryptic) talisman is again the now standard invocation of the "essence of the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper."[127]

The foregrounding of the Nine-Phoenix in the Tiānxīn tradition is further developed in another Southern Sòng text, the *Shàngqīng Běijí Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ* 上清北極天心正法, which begins with a seven-character lyric invocation whose first line reads: "Southern Nine-Phoenix, spitting true fire, burn away the [impurities in] the sufferer's home [so that] they all turn to ash and blow away." This lyric invocation, filled with imaginative transformations of the patient's home and family members, likewise summons the Four Saints of the North Pole amid martial language and

[126] ZHDZ 30:472.
[127] ZHDZ 30:505.

descriptive imagery typical in many respects of such lyric, Ritual Method invocations. Moreover, this stanza highlights the performative utility of such lyric invocations, in which ritual commands and transformations are incorporated into a dramatic liturgical sequence that was likely sung.[128] The image of the Nine-Phoenix "spitting fire" likewise appears first in the *Yùtáng Dàfǎ*,[129] and such imagery becomes standard in visualizations depicted in the *Língbǎo Lǐngjiào Jídù Jīnshū* and *Língbǎo Yùjiàn,* where the Nine-Phoenix, still connected with the "Divine Water" talisman, is further associated with pacing techniques such as a "Destroyer of Filth Polar-constellation" 破穢罡 to be used when entering the altar, with close resemblances to the methods and formula still used in modern Língbǎo ritual.[130]

While the symbol of the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth and its accompanying formula became important elements in Daoist ritual, as Daoist liturgists worked to integrate the new Ritual Method forms of Daoism –as well as local cults– into a comprehensive, 'big-tent' Daoist pantheon, where such pantheons are presented we find the Nine-Phoenix categorized together in the lower reaches of the hierarchy together with other martial figures of Ritual Method symbolism that always stand just above the gods of local society. The most articulate source in the Daoist Canon on such issues is by far the *Wúshàng Huánglù Dàzhāi Lìchéng Yí,* where virtually every religious symbol and deity acceptable and conceivable to Sòng Daoists is given a place within an enormous and highly idealized pantheon, divided into right and left squads of three ranks each. As with all such pantheons, each rank runs from high to low, with the numbered ranks themselves in

[128] ZHDZ 30:282. For the text of this invocation see the collection of canonical invocations elsewhere in this study.
[129] *Yùtáng Dàfǎ,* j.18, ZHDZ 30:447.
[130] For example, *Língbǎo Lǐngjiào Jídù Jīnshū* j.282, 破穢罡; and Ōfuchi 243-44.

hierarchical, descending order. In the Left Third Rank 左三班, after passing a host of celestial officials and hundreds of earth-and-underworld deities, as with each of the six ranks, near the bottom of the list the idealized, theoretical deities largely invented by Jiāng Shūyù and his collaborators give way, and symbols more frequently encountered in other ritual texts suddenly appear, including here the four heraldic animals so often invoked in ritual (青龍, 白虎, 朱雀, 玄武, as well as personifications of the 'Gate of Heaven, Earth-door and so on 天門地戶人門鬼路), the Six Jia and Six Ding [sic] spirits, and just further down our "Official Lord Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth," while a few places below come the pair "Demon-Swallower and Ghost-Eater" from the Tiānpéng Invocation.[131] Continuing down there follows an assortment of well-known figures from epidemic-expulsion rites (和瘟匡阜真人, 十二年王大神, and their various emissaries), and finally a series of local, Registry of Sacrifices, and household deities at the bottom of the entire hierarchy, a pattern consistently repeated in all Daoist pantheons from the Sòng onward that include Ritual Method spirits and extend down to the living religion on the ground.

In this interpretation of the Daoist ritual cosmos, the ancient Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth is here placed together in the same domain of lowly figures where the martial subordinates of the Daoist hierarchy meet with local gods. In the Right Second Rank 右二班, for example, at much the same elevation as the Nine-Phoenix we find most of the well-known Prime Marshals of Ritual Method Daoism concentrated into a single section, with the trio Dèng 鄧, Xìn 辛 and Zhāng 張 near the top,followed by largely idealized gods-of-place at the very bottom.[132]

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[131] *Wúshàng Huánglù Dàzhāi Lìchéng Yí*, j.53, ZHDZ 43:634. For a sense of proportion, this Left Third Rank begins on 43:625.

[132] *Wúshàng Huánglù Dàzhāi Lìchéng Yí*, j.51, the section of Prime Marshals appears on ZHDZ 43:623-4, while the Left Second Rank ends on 43:625.

The stratification of symbols into hierarchical groups is even clearer in the relatively compact pantheon presented in the Táinán-area Língbǎo Daoists' Invitation of the Spirits(請神/啟白).[133] Unlike the theoretical exercise in Jiāng Shūyù's 13th C. global pantheon, most of the symbols in the Língbǎo Invitation of the Spirits are encountered elsewhere, and have a certain life of their own in the historic religious system. Like all such liturgies, the Invitation of Spirits is a textual and temporal analogue of the physical altar-space, demarcated by altar-scroll paintings and written spirit-tablets 神位, which the Invitation of the Spirits liturgy invokes through textual performance. As such, in the articulation of hierarchy, clear distinctions are made in the groupings formed among symbols, much as the altar-scrolls themselves follow in contained sequences.

Among these distinct groupings, there is a clear and notable division between the upper portion of the inner altar, with its high cosmic gods, ranks of Emperors, Celestial Venerables, Stellar Lords, and departments of the celestial bureaucracy, and then, with a clear break, the martial and exorcistic deities of the Ritual Method strata of the pantheon, mostly major Prime Marshals known from the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*. It is within this section of Prime Marshals and other spirit-generals that we find Grand General Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth, right after "Fire-Rhinoceros Prime Marshal Zhū of the Thunder-Office" 火犀雷府朱元帥, the main figure of *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 227 and 228.[134] This same placement of the Nine-Phoenix amid the Prime Marshals and generals of the Ritual Method strata of the pantheon is repeated in both the grand Jade Altar Announcement of the Memorial and the simpler version of the Announcement

[133] Ōfuchi, 《中國人の宗教儀禮》 256-261.
[134] DFHY 227, ZHDZ 38:280-290; DFHY 228, 38:280-293. Marshal Zhū also appears in the following two chapters as part of the trio of Marshals Chén, Zhū, and Mǎ. These rites all feature formula of ritually-induced possession 附體.

performed in one-day Jiào (and with certain changes, funerals), where these Ritual Method-oriented rites likewise invoke a ranked pantheon limited to Ritual Method spirits, beginning from Tiānpéng and extending down to local gods of the Common Religion.[135]

The career of the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth, from early Zhèngyī register the exorcistic vanguard of ritual performance illustrates a number of important turns in the development of Sòng-era Ritual Method, and the incorporation of the Ritual Method into an inclusive Daoist synthesis concerned with bringing the local gods of the Common Religion into the Daoist world order. First, the (likely) Táng-era healing rite described in the *Zhèngyī Fǎwén Xiūzhēn Zhǐyào* clearly indicates a form of exorcistic healing that directly anticipates the kinds found throughout Sòng-Yuán-Míng texs of Ritual Method, in which visualizations, ritual commands and ritual actions –rather than repentance and its attendant "sacrifice of texts"– effect ritual healing. That these same symbols, invocations, and talismans were adopted in Sòng ritual of the *Yùtáng Dàfǎ* indicates at once continuity and adaptation, as its role in the specific act of healing-by-purification has, by the 12th C., shifted into its modern interpretation as a general act of consecrating the ritual arena itself by the Nine-Phoenix's filth-destroying powers.

And finally, by categorizing this ancient exorcistic "Grand General" among the Prime Marshals and other generals of Sòng Ritual Method, Daoist liturgists displayed a conscious strategy for grouping such exorcistic symbols within a relatively well-defined domain, distinguished from the higher bureaucratic symbols of the inner altar just as the Ritual Officer is distinguished from the Daoist priest. This distinction is reflected in the visual and spatial

[135] In the Jade Altar version, Tiānpéng and the Four Saints are invoked, preceded by the Six Masters (Ōfuchi 245), and followed with largely the same pantheon invoked in the "simpler" Announcement, again led by Tiānpéng at the head of other, major Prime Marshals and emissaries, followed last by the local deities of the Common Religion (Ōfuchi, 《中國人の宗教儀禮》 253-4).

arrangement of the Daoist altar, and its analogue in the temporal and textual dimensions of liturgy, in which Ritual Method symbols form the purifying, exorcistic vanguard at the leading edge of ritual performance, but as in the hierarchical society informing the Chinese religious imagination, these figures responsible for doing the dirty work at the business end of ritual power are assigned relatively low status in the overall symbolic order.

As the powers charged with purifying the mortal world and enforcing compulsion on the impure spirits of the dead, the symbols of the Ritual Method stand in superior contact with the domain of the deified dead and other environmental spirits enshrined and propitiated in the Common Religion. Hence in all representations of an inclusive Daoist pantheon, while regional, local and household gods are always at the bottom, just above this consciously contained strata of the Common Religion are the martial symbols of Ritual Method pantheons and their attendant emissaries, who serve to "hold down" 鎮 these unruly and intrinsically impure gods (from a conservative Daoist point of view) while also insulating the upper reaches of the Daoist bureaucracy from these spirits of the dead and the environment whom the facts of Chinee society have demanded that Daoists accommodate. In short, Daoist liturgies and altar-spaces clearly indicate that the rites and symbols of the Ritual Method constitute a well-defined strata within a larger synthesis, and that the placement and function of this Ritual Method domain stand in direct and necessary relation to the inclusion of Popular gods in the universal Daoist order.

The Grand General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart 素車白馬大將軍

While the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth is, by virtue of its ubiquity and priority in modern ritual, perhaps the most prominent example of an early Zhèngyī symbol to play a role in the Ritual Method synthesis, it is hardly the only such example. Also noteworthy is the Grand

General White Horse of the Unadorned (Funerary) Cart 素車白馬大將軍 (sòu geê ƀei mà đai ʃiong guñ), who, with but the rarest of exceptions, is invoked by name in every single Minor Rite and Língbǎo ceremony in Táinán, a remarkable distinction which no other deity or symbol can claim. This figure is a personification of the ancient funerary custom of using such an "unadorned cart and white horse" as a hearse or vehicle for those in mourning, while other sources indicate their use as a marker of repentance in conjunction with prayers to relieve drought.[136] As a personified deity, associations with the grave would persist through the Sòng, and are prominent in early sources, most notably the *Zhèngyī Fǎwén Jīngzhāng Guānpǐn* 正一法文經章官品,[137] in which Lord White Horse of the Unadorned Chariot, with his army of a hundred-thousand soldiers is deployed to sever the disease-causing influences of grave-demons.[138] In the *Chìsòngzǐ Zhānglì,* he is invoked to defeat similar afflictions emanating from graves, as well as curses and accusations from spirits of the dead.[139] By Táng-era texts of the Northern Emperor and the related Dòngyuán Sānmèi Shénzhòu 洞淵三昧神咒 traditions, he appears as part of large military detachments devoted to tasks ranging from guarding the state[140] to domestic protection and healing in the highly exorcistic "Morning Audience ritual of the liturgy of the Dongyuan shenzhou order," the *Tàishàng Dòngyuán Sānmèi Shénzhòu Zhāi Qīngdàn Xíngdào Yí* 太上洞淵三昧神咒齋清旦行道儀. [141] In this text, Lord White Horse of the Unadorned Cart is invoked in a section of "assistant

[136] The classic citations for the "unadorned cart and white horse" are from the *Shǐjì* 史記，本紀，卷六，秦始皇本紀第六，二世三年; and the *Hòu Hàn Shū*, 後漢書，列傳，卷八十一　獨行列傳，第七十一，范式. For the drought-prayer connection see 文心雕龍，梁，劉勰，卷二，祝盟第十.
[137] TC 133-4, ZHDZ 8:326-350.
[138] 正一法文經章官品, j.1, 收死人耗害, ZHDZ 8:331; also j.3, 收葬送塚墓鬼, ZHDZ 8:343.
[139] 赤松子章曆 j. 5, 開通道路章 ZHDZ 8:664-5; j.6 解謫章 ZHDZ 8:672 ; j.6, 齋亡人衣物解罪謫遷達章, ZHDZ 8:676.
[140] 太上元始天尊說北帝伏魔神咒妙經, j.10, 神兵護國品, ZHDZ 30:202.
[141] Schipper, TC 512; 太上洞淵三昧神咒齋清旦行道儀, 重稱法位, ZHDZ 30:158.

spirits" which the liturgy ascribes to "Zhèngyī ritual grades of Preceptors of the Three Heavens" 按三天法師正一科品.[142]

It is in this interplay between ostensibly Zhengyī rites and those of Běidì and Dòngyuán Shénzhòu traditions that we find a remarkable short scripture, the *Tàishàng Zhèngyī Zhòuguǐ Jīng* 太上正一咒鬼經, in which General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart is moved to the head of an exorcistic pantheon to be installed as guardians in the household of Daoist laity. The phrasing used invoking this pantheon is largely identical to that in the Morning Audience ritual of the *Dòngyuán Sānmèi Shénzhòu Zhāi*, while content depicting iconographic imagery and a retinue of accompanying spirits (including two seals of the Sānhuáng 三皇 tradition) is essentially identical to an invocation found in the *Běidì Fúmó Shénzhòu Jīng*;[143] suggesting that the *Tàishàng Zhèngyī Zhòuguǐ Jīng* was composed under direct influence of these two important texts of the late Táng, the latter of which, as we have seen, formed a major source for the Tiānxīn tradition.

This is significant as the short *Tàishàng Zhèngyī Zhòuguǐ Jīng* is easily among the clearest precursors to –or early products of– Ritual Method Daoism in the Míng canon, so much so that this text must be seen as either a product of the milieu in which the Daoist Ritual Method synthesis was then taking shape, or that it is in fact a Sòng text,[144] as here we find numerous hallmarks of Ritual Method Daoism. Among these are the figure of Celestial Master Zhāng as a prototypical

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[142] ZHDZ 30:158. Schipper(TC 512) likewise specifically notes this attribution to Zhèngyī codes. Here the term "fǎshī" 法師 is used in its ancient context indicating a Daoist initiate of a particular grade, which Mollier and Davis have rendered as "preceptor".

[143] 太上元始天尊說北帝伏魔神咒妙經 j.4, 捍厄品: 又咒曰...頭戴華蓋，足履魁罡，左扶六甲，右踞六丁，前有黃神，後有越章，神師誅伐，不避毫狂，先殺小鬼，次殺夜光，何神不伏，何鬼敢當，急急如律令 (ZHDZ 30:184). 太上正一咒鬼經: 頭戴華蓋，足躡魁罡，左扶六甲，右扶六丁，前有黃神，後有越章，神師誅伐，不避豪強，先殺邪神，後滅遊光，何神敢前，何鬼敢當 （ZHDZ 8:540）. On the two Sānhuáng seals mentioned here, Huángshén 黃神 and Yuèzhāng 越章 see Andersen, TC 977.

[144] Schipper (TC 488) tentatively dates this text to the Táng, while the editors of the ZHDZ conclude the text "seems to be a product of the Southern and Northern Dynasties" 似出於南北朝 (ZHDZ 8:540).

exorcist, as well as two lyric invocations replete with iconographic language, including one in rhyming seven-character verse which describes the Celestial Master "transforming [his] body" 變身 into a six-headed "demon king." In Daoism, the use of the term "transformation of the body" to denote either a general technique of liturgical transformation, or a one-to-one translation of identity only appears with the Ritual Method synthesis, and if this text predates the Sòng, then to the best of my knowledge it would be the earliest Daoist source to reference such a concept, although here in a narrative and lyric context, rather than in ritual instructions, as in the pioneering *Tàishàng Zhùguó Jiùmín Zōngzhēn Miyào* and later texts. As this technique of liturgical identification was adopted from Tantric practice, the fact that the Celestial Master's object of transformation here is an unnamed six-headed demon king is all the more noteworthy, as Tantric-style iconography has likewise accompanied this transformation.

The scripture itself is, like most short scriptures in the Daoist Canon, meant to be used in a ritual context, in this case a rite for the protection of a home after construction, with its dangerous disruption of earth spirits, but here in an environment rendered hostile by intensified predations of blood-drinking Popular gods, referred to generally as "the Way of the Wild" 野道. In fact the premise of the scripture is that the deified Lǎozi, Tàishàng Lǎojūn, emerged from a hidden seclusion of "one billion years" 久藏不見十億年 and revealed himself to Celestial Master Zhāng precisely to "seize all debauched deities receiving blood sacrifice" 捕血祀諸姦神 which have run amok on the earth, and threatens to "seize [you demons] by the head, chop [you] into three pieces and boil your bodies" 捉頭三斬烹汝身.To realize this ruthless extermination of demons masquerading as gods, Lǎojūn declares that he will "instruct my unsurpassed divine invocation"

授吾神咒爾莫前.[145] It may be the scripture itself is meant here, as every passage is delivered as an invocation, laced with ritual commands and ending with the standard line, "swiftly, swiftly as the law commands!" But immediately following this promise of a divine invocation, there comes a rhyming seven-character stanza spoken -or perhaps sung- by the Celestial Master:

> I eliminate the myriad disasters on behalf of Heaven and Earth,
> Transforming my body in the human realm [I] become a demon king.
> A body ten feet tall and six heads facing [each] direction,
> Copper fangs and iron teeth, clenching sharp points in my mouth.
> Hand holding a stone grinder and carrying a cauldron of soup,[146]
> Moving thunder and emitting lightning, returning to a heavenly glow...
> 吾為天地除萬殃　　變身人間作鬼王
> 身長丈六頭面方　　銅牙鐵齒銜鋒鋩
> 手持磐磨戴鑊湯　　動雷發電迴天光
> 星辰失度月慘黃　　顛風泄地日收光...

Regardless of whether this scripture dates to the Táng or the (early?) Sòng, with its extended iconographic language, references to liturgical identification and Tantric imagery, this stanza represents one of the earliest examples of the kind of invocation that will, in varying four, five, and seven-character meters, become a definitive hallmark of Ritual Method liturgy, but here with somewhat distinctive images ("carrying a cauldron of soup ") that further suggest an early context.

Next, after the passage copied from the *Běidì Fúmó Jīng* , and more threats to "bind you [demons], place you in the water, and boil you in a cauldron of soup," to be followed by torture at the hands of Jade Maidens, the Celestial Master pronounces yet another formula of transformation, this time with extensive iconographic identifications of his –or the priest's- body in space, whose phrases and symbols bear extensive resemblance with the "Minor Transformation of the Body

[145] ZHDZ 8:540.
[146] To carry out the dismemberment and boiling of demons' bodies as depicted in the preceding section.

Invocation" 小變身咒 used in the Táinán-area Língbǎo liturgy,[147] whose more precise source can be found in *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 225.[148]

After this section of the scripture (which again ends as a ritual command), there follows a pantheon of nine groups of deities, each with their own army of "one hundred thousand soldiers and officers," in language which is either taken directly from the Dòngyuán Sānmèi Shénzhòu "Morning Audience" liturgy,[149]or is in fact the Zhèngyī source cited in the Morning Audience text. While Lord White Horse of the Unadorned Cart is the third deity (or group) summoned in the Sānmèi Shénzhòu text (followed by lords of "Summoning and Investigating"), in the *Zhèngyī Zhòuguǐ Jīng* he is first, leading the pantheon of protective armies to be installed in the layperson's domicile. Unlike the Morning Audience text, however, here he is tasked with his traditional role of eliminating "demonic dead of the three [grave] mounds and five tombs" 三丘五墓之鬼.[150]

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[147] 太上正一咒鬼經：吾為天地師，驅逐如風雨，左手執青龍，右手據白虎，胸前有朱雀，背上有玄武，頭上有仙人，足下有玉女，手中三將軍，十指為司馬，功曹令束縛，送到魁罡下，徘徊三台間...(ZHDZ 8:540).
靈寶金籙玉壇發表科儀：吾為天地所使，頭戴日月，身披七星，三官五帝，搜捕邪精，前有朱雀，後有玄武，左有青龍，右有白虎...(Ōfuchi，《中國人の宗教儀禮》, 243). In certain Mínnán pronunciations, 使 and 師 are homophonous, though the tones are different. Where this 變身 invocation ends 何神不伏，何鬼不驚, compare with the 太上正一咒鬼經 just before the second instance of boiling demons:何神敢前，何鬼敢當. (ZHDZ 8:540).

[148] DFHY 225, 火犀大仙馬靈官大法, 變神, ZHDZ 38:270.

[149] *Tàishàng Dòngyuán Sānmèi Shénzhòu Zhāi Qīngdàn Xíngdào Yí* 太上洞淵三昧神咒齋清旦行道儀, ZHDZ 30:158-9.

[150] 太上正一咒鬼經, ZHDZ 8:541. The short scripture continues with a review of various construction and demolition-related projects which would disturb "earth-spirits" 土精 and "earth-poisons" 土毒 along with other corpse-energies, which the scripture promises to "gather in" 收 from the family domicile. In several subsequent sections, lists of demonic afflictions follow, together with renewed attacks on the ostentations of spirits enriching themselves through cultic veneration. Emphatic threats of violent exorcism are woven throughout a rhythmic litany of descriptively "named" demonic dead 鬼, who populate every place and byway in the Middle Kingdom. The scripture paints a scene of omnipresent danger and demonic encirclement. Notably, the text ends with the observation that recitation of the scripture and the demon's names will bring about immediate healing (8:453), though demonic ghosts who do not "comply with the invocation, each will have his head broken into ten parts, with head and body ground to bits." 鬼不隨咒，各頭破作十分， 身首糜碎.

In the medieval compendia of Zhèngyī ritual petitions *Chìsòngzǐ Zhāngli* 赤松子章曆,[151] numerous memorials invoke the General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart –often with his same contingent of one hundred-thousand troops– to prosecute exorcistic intercession with spirits of the dead. By the Sòng, this same general assignment has expanded to a virtual sub-genre of the "White Horse of the Unadorned Cart Memorial," with such documents forming a standard feature of mortuary ritual (of both "Retreat" 齋 and "Universal Salvation"普度 varieties) in most of the major Southern Sòng compendia.[152] Interestingly, the General makes his one and only appearance in the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* in this context, in a memorial for mortuary rites.[153] Thus unlike the other Daoist symbols examined here, from the Sòng onward, and in keeping with his ancient roots, our General found a niche within the grand mortuary rites, and is conspicuously absent from the kinds of healing, weather-related and other rites of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán, Fǎhaǐ Yìzhū,* and other Ritual Method compendia.

Echoing this long association with rituals for the dead, the influential *Scripture of the Jade Pivot,* recited in virtually every significant Daoist ritual, mentions General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart in this same context, thus ensuring his continued omnipresence in living Daoism from the Southern Sòng to the present day. In a passage promising deliverance from epidemics and other afflictions arising from "stale vapors of exposed corpses" 伏屍故氣, as well as "sepulchral lawsuits, contamination from cloud-souls of the dead, or corpse-vapors," the text declares that for

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[151] 赤松子章曆 j.5, 開通道路章； 赤松子章曆 j. 6, 解謫章； 赤松子章曆 j.6, 齋亡人衣物解罪謫遷達章.

[152] See for example 太上濟度章赦，卷中　官八，章　二，素車白馬章; 太上三洞表文，卷中　澄三，素車白馬章; 上清靈寶大法　一，卷之五十九　寫八，齋法宗旨門　六，拜素車白馬章;上清靈寶大法　二，卷之二十三　彩五，章詞表牘品　一，素車白馬章. In addition to these sources, a document of the same title is mentioned in 靈寶無量度人上經大法 j. 54, 普度符誥品　一, 真訓修用; and 道法會元 180, 上清五元玉冊九靈飛步章奏祕法, 章式第二, 大章本式 .

[153] DFHY 180, 清五元玉冊九靈飛步章奏祕法, 大章本式. Likewise, this figure does not appear in the FHYZ.

those who recite the scripture, the Supreme [Lord-on]-High will dispatch Grand General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart to "supervise" 監 the souls of ancestors redeemed through rites of deliverance.[154] The *Collected Commentaries on the Scripture of the Jade Pivot* clarifies this passage by specifying how "If one can, with a sincere heart, recite this scripture, and burn talismans and seal-script [documents], then the Thunder Office will dispatch the General of the White Horse and Unadorned Cart to lift [one's ancestors] out, so that they do not fall into this suffering."[155]

Perhaps because of this passage in the *Scripture of the Jade Pivot*, and perhaps as a legacy of grand, Sòng-era mortuary rites, General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart has attained an enduring presence in not just the Língbǎo Invitation of the Spirits pantheon, but also in the Táinán-area Minor Rite of both Black-head and Xújiǎ tradition-groups. In Táinán City proper, in virtually every ritual performance, Daoist priests and Minor Rite Ritual Masters all invoke this ancient deity, a distinction unmatched by the other ancient, pre-Sòng symbols considered here, which are occulted in some Minor Rite traditions through textual elision (as with the Nine-Phoenix), or by synoptic allusion (as in the Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms).

In the Xújiǎ tradition-group of the Bǎoān Gōng 保安宮, General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart is invoked in the long, Daoist-style spoken invocation of the pantheon (CXT 3.7-3.12), in the section dealing specifically with patriarchs and matriarchs of the Minor Rite tradition as constructed in this particular text, and right before the core Three Altars pantheon, which here is vertically expanded to include Pǔ-Ān 普庵 and General Black Tiger 黑虎將軍 in upper and

[154] 九天應元雷聲普化天尊玉樞寶經, ZHDZ 31:299.
[155] 若能誠心誦經，焚燒符籙，則雷司差素車白馬之將以拔之，使人不陷此苦也。九天應元雷聲普化天尊玉樞寶經集註，卷下 ZHDZ 31:313.

lower altars, respectively.[156]Minor Rite altars of the Black-head tradition-group likewise invoke General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart as part of the opening sequence of ritual, here as the primary figure in the formula used to consecrate the sword.[157] In addition, there is a dedicated invocation for the General which, in my years of observation was only used once, during the ceremony to open the temple doors of the restored Héshèng Táng, when it was recited along with the other, rarely-used invocations for all the ritual implements, which are grouped together in the same separate volume of invocations. Here, the stanza for the Seven-Star Sword and General Unadorned Cart are again placed together, with the latter featuring repeated imagery of the ritual sword, emphasizing the linkage between these two elements in this tradition.

However, this rarely-used invocation also subtly affirms the ancient and long-running associations with mortuary ritual, as well as the exorcism of epidemics linked in numerous Daoist texts to the corpse-vapors and unclean dead that the General of the Unadorned Cart long specialized in "cutting off." The invocation opens in typical fashion with depiction of the deity and his primary ritual actions: [158]

> I reverently summon Grand General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart,
> Hand holding a jeweled sword, moving Heaven and Earth.

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[156] CXT 3.8. In this respect, General Black Tiger, aka. "Prime Marshal of the Lower Altar" 下壇元帥, is essentially a universal designation, here balanced by the assignment of Pǔ-Ān to a somewhat hypothetical "Upper Altar" which, unlike the other positions mentioned here is not represented by images or extensive ritual language.

[157] HST 開壇 KT:7

[158] HST 4:3: 素車白馬大將軍

謹請素車白馬大將軍　手執寶劍動乾坤
收斬凶神並惡煞　扶衰[喪]治病移瘟瘴
天尊敕降斬邪魔　天上差來鎮廟門
若有內邪為怪者　寶劍寸斬不留停
合花[喝]天兵為軍聲　集福迎祥慶安寧
弟子壇前傳拜請　素車將軍速降臨
神兵火急如律令

Slaying malevolent deities and evil Killer-spirits,
Sending-off the coffin, healing disease, and removing epidemics[159]...
謹請素車白馬大將軍　　手執寶劍動乾坤
收斬凶神並惡煞　　扶衰[喪]治病移瘟瘴

Thus it seems likely that the enduring association of this General –practically synonymous with "sending-off" the dead– with banishing the pathogenic influences of graves and death-pollution remained vital into late imperial popular culture, even though contemporary Ritual Masters whom I have asked now see him as a more generalized protector and something of a messenger, a role assigned to most horse-related deities (like Sire Horse-emissary 馬使爺), but also implied in the many memorials 章 which bear his name, and in his position within the vast *Huánglù Dàzhāi* pantheon, where he is placed near the bottom of the Right Second Rank among groups of emissaries.[160]

There could well be some other, less visible path whereby this ancient figure has come to form a small yet ubiquitous presence in Táinán-area Daoist and Minor Rite ritual. Perhaps his deployment for domestic exorcism in the *Zhèngyī Zhòuguǐ Jīng* points to a presence in popular ritual where this symbol may have had, or taken on, a life of its own. With the *Scripture of the Jade Pivot*, the modern Invitation of the Spirits, and Sòng-era mortuary rites all raising the profile of the ancient General, Daoist ceremony alone could perhaps account for his continued relevance in the religious imagination. His role as an exorcistic emissary may likewise have recommended his attachment to these Tantric-Popular Ritual Method traditions.

[159] Following the Miàoshòu Gōng manuscript version which reads 扶喪 for the HST manuscript's 扶衰.
[160] 無上黃籙大齋立成儀, j.55 右班二, ZHDZ 43:651.

But association with the ritual sword in particular, shared by all regional Black-head Minor Rite traditions, suggests there may have been some other performative dimension, apart from these later, text-intensive Daoist contexts, which enhanced the importance and utility of this exorcistic general. The invocation for consecrating the sword commands with one stroke to "cut-off [perverse demons] in the human world, and in the Five Marchmounts, [let them] be seized and sent to Fēngdū [the underworld], and enter the forbidden prison" 斬斷人間並五嶽，押去酆都，速入禁牢.[161] Such underworld imagery, though rather general, may echo the long-standing associations between this symbol and the chthonic realm of graves and the dead. The weaponization of these symbols, however, in connection with the Seven-Star Sword appears to represent a development within circles of Tantric-Popular practice which has left too few clues in the available evidence. Whatever the case, General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart, in his slender omnipresence, has attained a kind of immortality in ritual performance, and can claim distinction as arguably the most ancient figure kept alive by name in the modern Minor Rite.

The Talisman Emissaries Three Realms 三界直符使者

In Ritual Master ceremony of more Tantric-Popular varieties, one of the most widely distributed and ritually foregrounded symbols of any kind, and aside from symbolism of the Five Camps, perhaps *the* most prominent symbolic element derived from Daoism are the Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms, who in primary texts are known by a range of alternate designations, from the "On-duty Talisman Emissaries" 直符使者, to the "Emissaries of the Three Realms" 三界使者 and "Talisman Officials of the Three Realms" 三界直符官, among other

[161] Following the preferable Ānpíng MSG version. Here the HST manuscript reads "be seized and sent to Fēngdū and swiftly enter the golden net 速入金羅, with 金羅 and 禁牢 being Mínnán homophones.

variant and recombinant titles (直符神 etc.), while they are also frequently invoked by their separate nomenclature as emissaries of the Upper 上, Middle 中, and Lower 下 realms 界.

In the Táinán region, invocation of these Talisman Emissaries at the commencement of most rites forms a primary hallmark of the Xújiǎ 徐甲 tradition-group, which encompasses both the Minor Rite lineage-group of the Nánchǎng Bǎoān Gōng 南廠保安宮 and the Red-Headed rites of the Língbǎo Daoist priests.Indeed this structural element of ritual, the text of the invocation itself, and even the melody used to sing it are all shared by both this most prolific of Minor Rite lineage-groups and the Daoist priests' Red-Headed tradition. [162] Together with several shared liturgies (such as the Sacrifice to the Stars 祭星 and core parts of Smiting the Citadel 打城), the Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms are among the numerous factors which demonstrate that Táinán-area practitioners who regard the Realized Man Xú 徐甲真人 as Ancestral Master of their Ritual Method 法 must be seen as transmitting a historically linked tradition-group, a situation which defies the premises of an ostensible "Fǎ Jiào" 法教. In these linked traditions, the invocation to the Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms is sung three times, once each for the Emissaries of the Upper 上, Middle 中, and Lower 下 realms, though it is common in many Minor Rite altars to sing this invocation only once, while voicing "Upper, Middle, and Lower" realms in a single breath, so that by singing the invocation only once, the ritual purpose of the invocation is still fulfilled.

In the Lűshān lineage-group of Pénghú, after the Central Reverend has completed initial purification of the altar-space, the first invocation sung by the troupe is usually the stanza

[162] CXT 2, Ōfuchi, 《中國人の宗教儀禮》, 706-7.

summoning the Lǘshān Emissaries of Spiritual Communication 閭山門下靈通使, which ends by commanding that the "Three Emissaries of Spiritual Communication swiftly descend" 靈通三使速臨來.[163] In Táiwān, the versions I have seen of this same invocation end by invoking the "Holy Lǘshān Ancestor" 閭山聖祖 (or "Lord of the Rite" 閭山法主), even though the opening line still specifically addresses an Emissary of Spiritual Communication.[164] In what appears to be considerable conflation of content, the competing priorities of commencing ritual by summoning the Three Emissaries and the Ancestral Master of the tradition have evidently created something of a dual-purpose invocation in this instance, though this same phrasing "Emissaries of Spiritual Communication" 靈通使 appears in connection with the Talisman Emissaries in other Fujianese manuscripts.

The ritual prominence of these symbols is even more pronounced in the Lǘshān altars of upland Fújiàn documented by Yè Míngshēng and John Lagerwey, where different but clearly related traditions in Lóngyán 龍巖, Jiànyáng 建陽, and Shòuníng 壽寧 all feature repeated and elaborate summons of the Talisman Emissaries in the commencement of ritual. In the Lóngyán area Wánglǎo 王姥 tradition, the major liturgy used to initiate their Jiào 醮, the *Dàxiāng Gòng Yīzōng* 大香供一宗 (*Grand Offering of Incense*), is structured around invocation of the Talisman Emissaries, with sequences framed by repeated choruses proclaiming the "labors of the Talisman Emissary Spirits 勞直符神.[165] Likewise the *Xiǎoxiāng Gòng Yīzōng* 小香供一宗(*Minor Offering of Incense*) used in either smaller rites or as a nocturnal preliminary to the *Grand Offering of*

[163] Chì Fàntáo Gōng 赤樊桃宮 4, 呂山門下靈通使.
[164] The version Liú Zhīwàn examines (1974:235) ends with "Lord-of-the-Rite", while HST 2:6 has "Holy Ancestor" 閭山聖祖.
[165] *Guāngjì Tán*, 2: 157-170, see especially 157, 164-7, and 170.

Incense, foregrounds invocation of the Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms as a primary component in initiating ritual and summoning the altar pantheon.[166] So too the liturgies of *Cángshēn Yīzōng* 藏身一宗 (*Concealing the Body*),[167] and *Fāshēn Yīzōng* 發申一宗 (*Submission of Petition*)[168], both used in Jiào, and which summon the Talisman Emissaries in the opening stages of ritual as the means for establishing communication between the Ritual Master(s) and deities being summoned to the rite.[169] As these liturgical texts form sequential stages in the opening portion of larger Jiào, such repeated invocation of the Talisman Emissaries further underscores the importance attached to these symbols and their ritual function.

The Wǔlíng 五靈 tradition of Lóngyán, whose liturgical collection features more standard Daoist scriptures,[170] also commences ritual with two liturgies which feature prominent and repeated invocation of the Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms. In the *Grand Opening of the Altar* 大開壇, they are invoked in the commencement of a rite[171] which features extensive canonical Daoist material of the Four Saints of the North Pole, including four-character invocations for all four based on and commenced by the Tiānpéng Invocation,[172] as well as the same seven-character stanza for Zhēnwǔ found in two canonical Daoist texts, and which directly influenced related invocations still used in Táinán.[173] This *Grand Opening of the Altar* liturgy also uses a somewhat garbled version of the same classic invocation, "I reverently summon the Seven

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[166] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:171.
[167] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:179.
[168] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:209-211.
[169] See discussion of these and the other liturgical texts in *Guǎngjì Tán*, 1:116-7.
[170] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:1-35.
[171] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:129, 130.
[172] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:131-2. The Zhēnwǔ invocation appears in 元始天尊說北方真武妙經 ZHDZ 30:522, and 太上說玄天大聖真武本傳神明妙經 30:525. See my chapter on the Minor Rite Invocation Genre.
[173] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:132.

Stars of the Northern Dipper"謹請北斗七星 to burn the talisman of purification into the cup of water.[174] The following liturgy for summoning the spirits and submitting the memorial, *Wǔlíng Tōngbiǎo* 五靈通表 is again largely structured around a series of three oblations offered to each emissary of the Upper, Middle, and Lower Realms.[175]

In Jiànyáng to the north we find a similar situation, with the Talisman Emissaries frequently invoked at the opening of major ritual texts. The invitation of spirits given in the *Wénshū Quánběn* 文書全本 manuscript[176] begins by individual summons of the "On-duty Talisman Officials of Spiritual Communication" 靈通直符官 of the Upper, Middle, and Lower Realms, in language echoing the invocation of the Lǘshān Emissaries of Spiritual Communication 閭山靈通使. This same text continues by first summoning a whole series of five-directional Talisman Officials, each assigned to an elemental "citadel gate" 城門, and then in something of a unique elaboration, Talisman Officials of all the major deities of the altar-pantheon are named and summoned, followed by those of the year, month, day, and hour. The next sequence in this same manuscript, "Summons of the Standing Talismans" 請立符, again separately invokes the Talisman emissaries in a series of seven-character invocations.[177]

One of the most remarkable texts of this tradition, the *Nǎiniáng Zōngzǔ* 奶娘宗祖, which presents a long ritual narrative of Chén Jìnggū, also begins with individual summons of Talisman Emissaries of the Upper, Middle, and Lower Realms, using a mixture of titles including the same

[174] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:129.
[175] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:139-141.
[176] *Jiànyáng*, 446. For discussion of these ritual manuscripts and liturgical stages see p.133-4.
[177] *Jiànyáng*, 449-50.

"Talisman Lad" 符郎 used in the Táinán-area Xújiǎ tradition-group invocation.[178] Elsewhere in this same two-volume text, the Talisman Emissaries are described as "transmitting incense-missives" 直符使者傳香信.[179]

These symbols likewise figure prominently in the Buddhistic Lìyuán 梨園 tradition of Shòuníng County. Like all of these more hybrid traditions in which Ritual Master altars perform large-scale community rites, these begin with an Announcement of the Memorial 發奏科 in which the very first deities invoked are Talisman Officials 符官, while the following section separately summons Talisman Emissaries of the Upper, Middle, and Lower Realms. Continuing they are invoked several more times in seven-character stanzas, complete with a pseudo-Sanskrit mantra described in the ritual instructions as the "Mantra of the Three Upper, Middle, and Lower Realms" 上中下三界真言.[180] Amid a strongly hybrid pantheon of alternatingly Tantric, Buddhist, and Daoist figures, the emphatic invocation of these Talisman Emissaries continues to the very last section of the text.[181]

The consistency, prominence, and exuberant repetition given to invocation of these Talisman Emissaries stand as major hallmarks of these Tantric-Popular and hybrid traditions, from the Minor Rite traditions of Pénghú and Táiwān, to Lűshān altars across Fújiàn. At a basic level, the near universal distribution of these symbols would suggest an early date for their adoption into such practice, while further illustrating the broad coherence of this domain of Ritual Method, despite many other specific differences of performance and liturgy. Moreover, the tendency for

[178] *Jiànyáng*, 509.
[179] *Jiànyáng*, 526, 586.
[180] *Lìyuán*, 464-5.
[181] *Lìyuán*, 470. See the very end of 466 and 467 for the transition to Daoist high gods, while reaching down to local deities on 478.

repeated invocation clearly indicates the importance of their perceived role in ritual as the agents responsible for transmitting the Ritual Master's commands through both talismans and incense to the deities he or she summons and dispatches during ritual performance.

Even in the absence of these Talisman Emissaries, the Táinán-area Black-head Minor Rite tradition-group employs other formula whereby the first line spoken in ritual invokes the "Five Thunders Emissaries" 五雷使者, while consecration of the Ritual Ruler, also a fixture (in many altar-lineages) of opening ritual, features phrases of dispatching unspecified entities (presumably the Ritual Ruler itself) to Heaven and the Underworld, while regulating people and demonic dead in the "middle" mortal world, thus echoing the contours of the Three Realms and their Talisman Emissaries, even in the absence of their explicit invocation.[182] In this same Black-head tradition, the formula used to consecrate the talisman water (after the talisman has been burned into it) also invokes "Merit Officials" 功曹 who, as we will see, are often associated with the Talisman Emissaries in Daoist texts, as they are in the Lűshān tradition examined by Liú Zhīwàn (1974), where these two are invoked together at the end of the long "Upper Altar" 頂壇 sequence that bears considerable resemblance to the Táinán-area Bǎoān Gōng/Xǔjiǎ liturgy.[183] But such cases are the exception and not the norm, in which specific and often-repeated language names and summons these Talisman Emissaries as one of the most universal and conspicuous elements shared by most Ritual Master traditions of the more Tantric-Popular variety.

As with other symbols under examination here, this near-universal symbol-cluster, so definitive of Tantric-Popular Ritual Method liturgy, can be traced to medieval Zhèngyī Daoist

[182] Other liturgies in the HST folio, such as the Sacrifice to the Stars 祭星補運咒語, do feature invocation of the Emissaries of the Three Realms (HST 6:42), but not as fixed parts of normal ritual.
[183] Líu Zhīwàn,「閭山教之收魂法」, 224.

registers, and thence to major texts of the Sòng-era Ritual Method synthesis. The earliest record of such Talisman Emissaries is found in the late Táng texts *Tàishàng Sānwǔ Zhèngyī Mèngwēi Yuèlù Jiàoyí* 太上三五正一盟威閱籙醮儀 and *Tàishàng Zhèngyī Yuèlù Yí* 太上正一閱籙儀, both edited by Dù Guǎngtíng,[184] where in rites of externalizing 出官 the spirits of the "Supreme Orthodox Unity Register of the Community Earth-god Prefects of the Nine-regions" 太上正一九州社令籙, attached to this register are "Grand Generals, Merit Officials, Jade Youths, Jade Maidens, and On-Duty Talisman Emissaries" 大將軍、功曹、玉童、玉女、直符使者, who are commanded to subdue perverse spirits and protect the bearer of the register.[185]

Though here already grouped with the Merit Officials that will so often accompany their appearance, like other early sources, including several memorials in the *Chìsòngzǐ Zhāngli*,[186] these symbols are not yet associated with a tripartite scheme of Three Realms. For example, another, possibly Táng-era text, *Tàishàng Shuō Liùjiǎ Zhífú Bǎotāi Hùmìng Jīng* 太上說六甲直符保胎護命妙經 lays out an extensive pantheon of calendric "On-duty Talisman Minor Officials" 直符從官 whose worship is meant to protect pregnant mothers from demonic attacks.[187] Early Língbǎo texts likewise feature other kinds of "on-duty" talisman officials, most notably series of variously-named "Five Emperors On-Duty Talismans" that appear with great frequency in the Dùrén Jīng 度人經 and elsewhere.[188] Suffice it to say, the general concept of talisman officials or emissaries,

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[184] For both texts see TC 478.
[185] 太上三五正一盟威閱籙醮儀, ZHDZ 8:477; 太上正一閱籙儀 ZHDZ 8:482.
[186] 赤松子章曆 j.2 書符式; 赤松子章曆 j.4 上清言功章; 赤松子章曆 j.5 開通道路章.
[187] 太上說六甲直符保胎護命妙經, ZHDZ 6:196-198.
[188] For example see 元始五老赤書玉篇真文天書經, 卷上, 元始青帝真符 and throughout the first 上 juàn; also 靈寶無量度人上品妙經 j.1 天一, and throughout. See also 太上靈寶諸天內音自然玉字 j.1 大梵隱語無量洞章玉訣, 東方青帝八會內音自然玉字　九炁總諸天文. Yet another early Zhèngyī register likewise features

usually denoted by the term zhí 直(which I have rendered "on-duty," rather than "upright" or "vertical"),[189] was widely common to medieval and Táng-era Daoist texts, with many of these designations (such as Six Jiǎ and Five Emperors) continuing into Sòng sources.[190]

While various "on-duty talismans" appear with great frequency in the influential text of transitional, or proto-Ritual Method, the *Jīnsuǒ Líuzhū Yǐn,* at times with signs of their militarization,[191] the crystallization of these symbols as Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms appears only with texts of the Tiānxīn tradition, beginning with the *Tàishàng Zhùguó Jiumín Zōngzhēn Miyào.* In the second chapter of this the earliest work of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, where the text outlines the methods of preparing talismans, an entire duodenary calendar of "on-duty talisman" spirits is listed, corresponding to the twelve earthly branches, each depicted with the head of its corresponding zodiacal sign on a human body, wearing a robe of an appropriate directional color and holding a weapon.

Following these twelve are three more assigned to the realms of Heaven, Earth, and the "Sky" 天界直符，地界直符，空界直符.[192] And while their collective identity as the "On-duty Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms" 三界直符使者 is specified in a following section, where the Ritual Master is instructed to notify them before drawing a talisman, here they are also given names, the surnames of which still remain in the Táinán-area Língbǎo liturgy of the

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such Five Emperors Talisman (emissaries); see 太上三五正一盟威籙 j. 6 太上正一三五功曹籙品第二十三; and 太上正一盟威法籙　逐七, 太上護身將軍籙.

[189] From the ROC MOE 國語辭典 entry for 直, as the third verbal 動 meaning: "當班、站勤。通「值」。《金史．卷一七．哀宗本紀上》：「日二人直，備顧問。」."

[190] See for example 無上玄元三天玉堂大法 j.24 延生度厄品, 斷瘟法, where a formula of Exteriorizing Officials 出官 repeats language common to earlier sources.

[191] See for example 金鎖流珠引 j.28, 考召法師說巡遊圖法.

[192] ZHDZ 30:218.

Announcement of the Memorial.[193] The name of the last one here is none other than Zhāng Yuánbó 張元伯, one of the Five Epidemic Emissaries 五瘟使,[194] and also one of the demons of the Five Departments 五部鬼 which the *Yùtáng Dàfǎ* credits the first Celestial Master with subduing in the archetypal feat that established the Celestial Master as an exorcist and prototypical Ritual Officer. In this same pivotal passage, Zhāng Yuánbó is said to have sworn a pact with the Celestial Master, after which "on account of his loyal honesty was made an On-duty Talisman [emissary] of the Thunder Bureau."[195] "Emissary Zhāng" 張使者, as he is called in the modern Língbǎo Announcement rite and the Minor Rite invocations[196] enjoys extensive employment in Daoist texts of Sòng-Yuán-Míng Ritual Method, where his full identity is still sometimes specified.[197] The *Shàngqīng Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ,* which likewise features a range of different "on-duty talisman emissaries" of the day and hour, in a section naming the generals and marshals of the North Pole Department of Exorcism –all fierce, demonic gods– near the end these same three Emissaries of the Three Realms are again listed by name, with the Three Realms themselves identified by the more traditional Daoist scheme of Heaven, Earth, and Water.[198] Hence this new triad of

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[193] The "regular" Announcement of the Memorial (Ōfuchi, 《中國人の宗教儀禮》, 254), not the grand Jade Altar Announcement of the Memorial 玉壇發表.

[194] 康豹 (Paul Katz), 《臺灣的王爺信仰》, (商鼎文化出版社, 1997), 19, where he cites the entry on the Five Epidemic Emissaries 五瘟使 from the *Sānjiào Yuánliú Sōushén Dàquán.*

[195] Yùtáng Dàfǎ j. 24, 斷瘟法, ZHDZ 30:475. See my discussion of this subject in the section on Ancestral Masters and the Sòng-era transformation of Celestial Master Zhāng into a prototypical exorcist.

[196] In HST 1:29 Madame Tsua (Cài)蔡氏夫人, he is one of the five-directional generals assigned to the altar-system depicted in this invocation, and is still associated with talismans, where he is called "Emissary Zhāng of the Southern Spiritual Talisman"南方靈符張使者. The five-directional altar-system in this invocation is still used by the Héshèng Táng and its related altars when conducting the rite of Building a Bridge to Cross-over Adversity 造橋過限, with spirit-tablets and offering tables set up for each of the five, the others being local or regional deities which await further identification.

[197] As in FHYZ 40, where he is the Main General 主將, ZHDZ 41:598. Also, DFHY 82. In the larger syntheses, see 靈寶無量度人上經大法 j.37, 回死起生品; 靈寶玉鑑 j. 8 召役發遣門, 召水界直符.

[198] 上清天心正法, j.6, ZHDZ 30:277.

Talisman Emissaries is directly linked in key Daoist sources with the subordination of demonic gods and their reformation into servants of the Ritual Master.

From their formation in the Tiānxīn tradition, these symbols gained widespread adoption in the large-scale ritual compendia like both editions of *Tàishàng Língbǎo Dàfǎ*[199] and the *Língbǎo Língjiào Jìdù Jīnshū*,[200] to such texts as the Míng collection of hymns, the *Yùyīn Fǎshì*.[201] Likewise they appear throughout the different rites of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*.[202]

But their prominence in more Popular ritual is perhaps reflected where they appear in narrative fiction, such as the *Record of Eunuch Three Treasure's Western Sea [Voyage]*, in which On-duty Talisman Emissaries and Merit Officials transmit memorials to the Jade Emperor.[203] In *Journey to the West*, where On-duty Talisman Emissaries figure in one scene, they are again depicted as transmitting memorials on behalf of the Celestial Master to the Jade Emperor, with one even specifically named as the On-duty Talisman Emissary of the Upper Realm 上界直符使者.[204] But even in the Sòng, these Talisman Emissaries appear in a *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* anecdote, where a retired official obtains three talismans to bring his young wife back to life after she suddenly died, and these On-duty Talisman Emissaries eventually obtain the woman's soul from Mount Tài and escort her back to her body, where she revives.[205]

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[199] E.g. 上清靈寶大法 （寧全真，王契真），j.39, 齋法符籙門, 發奏章; j.65 雜用牒劄帖關門, 三界直符關; 上清靈寶大法（金允中）j.39 散壇設醮品上，黃籙大齋醮謝真靈三百六十位 （in the lower reaches of the pantheon）;

[200] 靈寶領教濟度金書 j.217, 科儀立成品， 二百六璇璣齋用， 七, 設醮開啟祝幕儀, 灑淨;

[201] 玉音法事, 卷中， 請符使 .

[202] See for example DFHY 13, 上界符，中界符，下界符； DFHY 23 清微玉宸鍊度符誥文檢品, 遞關; DFHY 28 清微紫光奏告符法, 召斗中直符使者符, DFHY 30 紫極玄樞奏告大法, 召天界直符使者符; DFHY 230 上清馬陳朱三靈官祕法, 將班; DFHY 236 正一龍虎玄壇大法序, 部下神將.

[203] *Sānbǎo Tàijiàn Xīyáng Jì* 三寶太監西洋記通俗演義, j.5, 第二十一回， 軟水洋換將硬水 吸鐵嶺借下天兵; also j.六, 第三十回， 羊角大仙歸天曹 羊角大仙錦囊計.

[204] 西遊記, 第八十七回, 鳳仙郡冒天止雨 孫大聖勸善施霖.

[205] 太平廣記 j.298, 神八, 趙州參軍妻.

In what is traditionally regarded as a Táng Medical classic, the *Qiānjīn Yìfāng*, a formula for expelling plague involves these On-Duty Talisman Emissaries, and depicts graphic violence against demons:

> Ritual method for consecrating water to expel demons:
> Xíxí, xiáng xiáng, then the water produces a glow. On-duty Talisman Emissary, stands by the waterside. Truly correcting and mending the weakness, perverse pneumas are eliminated. In my left hand I seize demons, in my right hand holding a metal axe I slay demons. Swiftly, swiftly as the law commands![206]
> 勅水逐鬼法
> 習習詳詳便生水光。直符使者。住立水傍。真正補虛邪氣消亡。吾左手捉鬼。右手持金□戊斧斬鬼死。急急如律令

This Táng-era healing formula and the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* anecdote suggest these Talisman Emissaries enjoyed a certain presence in popular culture predating the formation of the Tiānxīn corpus, while the two works of Míng fiction demonstrate that these symbols were recognizable elements in the ritual culture of the time. Such a recognizable presence would likely derive from prominence in ritual, perhaps even involving paper effigies like those of the Merit Officials used in Daoist ritual today. In contemporary ritual, the invocation for the Talisman Emissaries is sung in many Red-Headed rites of the Língbǎo Daoist priests, in the rite of Burning Oil to Drive-away Filth at the commencement of the Jiào, and in ordination rites involving climbing the Sword Ladder.

As bureaucratic messengers, the fact that these symbols have become primarily aligned with Tantric-Popular, Red-Headed ceremony –even among the Língbǎo Daoist priests– is noteworthy, and may hearken back to their formative contexts in the Tiānxīn tradition, where they

[206] 千金翼方 / 卷二十九 / 禁經上 / 禁溫疫時行第七.

are linked to the subordination of local spirits, with this development perhaps based in an earlier currency in popular exorcistic ritual, as found in the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* tale and the *Qiānjīn Yìfāng* exorcistic healing spell. Whatever the case, the Táinán-area Língbǎo Announcement of the Memorial text demonstrates a direct continuity with those early Tiānxīn sources, but in ritual performance, where invocation of the Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms opens the ceremony, such ceremony is always Red-Headed in nature, with the Daoist priest tying on a red headband and singing the three invocations in the Red-Headed melody, using essentially the same text as the Bǎo-ān Gōng/Xújiǎ Minor Rite tradition.

Hence there is a long and extensive association of these symbols with the more Popular and exorcistic domain of Daoist Ritual Method. But ultimately these Talisman Emissaries have acquired their most prominent position in the rites of Tantric-Popular traditions, including those transmitted in Táinán temple communities and in Lǘshān altars across Fújiàn and beyond. Given the wide distribution and symbolic priority of these symbols, we are again reminded that there is no form of Ritual Method, even highly Buddhistic traditions, without deep Daoist historical roots. Such Daoist symbols and linguistic conventions especially are not latter accretions, but represent elements common to the historic synthesis of the Ritual Method movement, in which those forms of Daoism in closest contact with local cults and local society played an essential role.

The Tantric Revolution and the technique of Liturgical Identification

The introduction and diffusion of Esoteric Buddhism in Chinese society during the Táng and Sòng initiated perhaps the most extensive and consequential transformation of the religious culture since the rise of Buddhist and Daoist traditions in the early medieval period. Importantly, the influx of Esoteric Buddhist systems coincided with the profound demographic shifts in

Chinese society. This meant that the profound stimulation of local cults and intensified interaction among urban centers and hinterland settlement, brought on by patterns of migration and development in southeastern China, presented practitioners of Tantric ritual arts with an expanding religious sphere dominated by Spirit-mediums. But unlike their Daoist counterparts, practitioners of certain Tantric ritual methods possessed ritual technologies which from their Indic origins featured the ritual orchestration and control of spirit-possession. Moreover, the entire Tantric movement in India was in part characterized by the assimilation of local Indian deities into the ritual altars of Tantric practitioners, be they Śavaite, Buddhist, or Jain.[207] In fact, what is often called Esoteric Buddhism, following the indigenous terminology "Secret Teaching" 密教 (Mìjiào), is itself a complex set of related traditions which form a Buddhist-brand expression of a much broader pan-Indian movement. Most of the prominent deities imported to China through Esoteric Buddhism originated as local "Hindu" or non-Buddhist spirits, including local tutelary deities, environmental spirits, and disease demons which had been ritually and symbolically subordinated to a ritual expert and thence attached to larger, supra-local pantheons. Clearly, in these developments we have a remarkable parallel with the Daoist assimilation of local gods as low-ranking martial protectors, a process which the diffusion of Tantric ritual greatly accelerated.

In view of these formative contexts of Esoteric Buddhism, as well as its symbolic contents and subsequent developments, I will follow such scholars as Ronald Davidson (2002) and Geoffrey Samuel (2008) in referring to this broader religious movement as Tantric, a term which at once indicates how these traditions, symbols, and methods transcend Buddhism per se, and allows for more flexible discussion of developments which likewise are not strictly Buddhist in nature.

[207] See Samuel 2008:101-110, and 146-151, 257ff.

The profound extent of the Tantric revolution in China has with but a handful of important exceptions failed to gain a degree of scholarly attention commensurate with its historic importance, largely because of trends in scholarship identified by Hsieh Shu-wei in his recent study of the intersections among Tantric and Daoist ritual, where he rightly charges that the boundaries of academic fields, in both Buddhist and Daoist studies, have served to obscure major developments that transcend these fields.[208] Furthermore, Buddhist studies in particular have tended to emphasize doctrine and scriptural exegesis to the near total neglect of ritual, with traditional scholars of Buddhism largely disinclined to accept "popularizations" or the social diffusion of Buddhist practices as a legitimate subject of inquiry. Hsieh further notes that scholars of Buddhism have tended to overlook non-scriuptural and non-Buddhist sources, which afford valuable testimony of the actual state of religious practice in history. In addition, it should be noted that Buddhist studies have traditionally been highly influenced by the state of Japanese Buddhism, in which sects are more clearly distinguished according to doctrinal affiliation, with the result that while the Japanese Shingon school presents a clear manifestation of Esoteric Buddhism, the absence of such an institutionally-defined tradition in China has led many scholars to doubt the enduring influence of Esoteric Buddhism in the Middle Kingdom, with particular puzzlement over the fate of Sòng-era translation projects, which appear to have left no clearly defined institutional signature.[209]

What scholars from Michel Strickmann, Edward Davis, and Hsieh Shu-wei in particular have shown is that Tantric ritual, symbolism, and iconography spread like wildfire throughout

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[208] Hsieh, 《道密法圓》,

[209] See for example Charles D. Orzech, "The 'Great Teaching of Yoga': the Chinese Appropriation of the Tantras, and the Question of Esoteric Buddhism," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 34:1 (2008):29-78.

Chinese religious culture from the late Táng onward, where at every level of society these Tantric elements were engaged, adapted, and developed by Chinese ritual experts of diverse backgrounds. Within Buddhism itself, the much-neglected domain of ritual in particular continues to feature a prominent Tantric orientation, from that most widespread of all Buddhist rituals, the Rite of Universal Salvation 普度, aka the Yújiā Yànkǒu 瑜伽焰口, to the well-known Míng-era altar-paintings used in the Shuǐlù Zhāi 水陸齋, which depict a vibrant world of Tantric iconography and ritual well into the late imperial period.

As Tantric religion is primarily concerned with ritual, when these ritual forms became increasingly diffused throughout Chinese society, practitioners of Tantric ritual arts became players in what Hsieh Shu-wei has portrayed as a ritual marketplace, one characterized by competition among different classes of ritual experts, including Spirit-mediums, Daoist priests, and other Buddhist monastics as the primary actors. Building on Hsieh's more general argument that perceptions of ritual efficacy determined success in this ritual marketplace, Tantric ritual included a particular suite of ritual technology that enabled Tantric practitioners to gain a competitive advantage in this ritual marketplace: methods for constructing altars and conducting rites for the attainment of all manner of earthly objectives, performative techniques of mantras and mudras which express commanding ritual power, a rich palate of iconographically stunning deities, and in many cases techniques for controlling spirit-possession, the ritual phenomenon at the center of local Chinese religion. Within these methods was the core innovation the Tantric revolution as first identified by Strickmann: the ritual identification of the adept with a commanding deity, whereby the Tantric priest became empowered to control subordinate pantheons and other spirits, including those that caused disease, or were worshipped in local shrines and manifested through

Spirit-mediums.[210] This technique, which I call liturgical identification, is not only a central feature of Tantric religion, it will in turn form a definitive element of the Ritual Method movement, where it became further enhanced by bodily practices of resemblance adapted from Spirit-mediums.

Unlike in Japan, where the Shingon school has largely preserved Táng-era Esoteric Buddhism until the present,[211] the diffusion of Tantric ritual into Chinese society from the late Táng onward produced a different set of dynamics in which para-monastic and lay Tantric practitioners appear to have taken root within local society by the Five Dynasties and early Sòng, and that following the Sòng emergence of Daoist Ritual Method traditions, these forms of highly Tantric Ritual Method, both Daoist and especially what I term Tantric-Popular, came to dominate the ritual marketplace in southern China in particular. Meanwhile, monastic Buddhists increasingly specialized in mortuary ritual, and from the Sòng onward have tended to play a relatively diminished role in those sectors of the ritual marketplace most concerned with the temple-cult and its related rites of individual healing and protection. Here, Ritual Masters and Daoist priests, equipped with their adaptations of Tantric methods, specialized in these market sectors which aligned them more directly with the temple-cults and Spirit-mediums at the center of local society and local religion.

In his recent study, Hsieh identifies a popularized domain of Tantric practitioners, functioning within local society, as a "basis" from which later developments of what I term Ritual Method Daoism drew inspiration. While Hsieh begins his study with a fascinating account of a Northern Sòng official's description of "Master Wū" 師巫 and spirit-altars 神壇, giving early

[210] Strickmann, *Magical Medicine*, 201. See below.
[211] Strickmann observes that "Like Taoism in Taiwan, Japanese Tantric Buddhism represents a living tradition in unbroken continuity and evolution from medieval times." (*Magical Medicine*, 200).

testimony of what appears to be a form of Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums performing large and small scale ritual in Jiāngxī (洪州),[212] he argues that given the state of available evidence, the extent of this popularized Tantric "basis" in the religious culture must be inferred from later, primarily Southern Sòng evidence, from Bái Yùchán's well-known discourse on Yoga 瑜伽 ritualists, to the extensive Tantric iconography and other content such as mantras and mudras found in Sòng Daoist sources.

In fact, only a broader diffusion of Tantric symbols and practice can account for the relatively sudden appearance in the Five Dynasties and Sòng of Daoist Ritual Method texts, like those of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ and (likely) 12th century texts of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* such as the *Shàngqīng Tiānpéng Fúmó Dàfǎ* 上清天蓬伏魔大法,[213] among others, in which Tantric iconography, language, and other ritual elements figure quite prominently. Even if these related Tiānxīn and Tiānpéng traditions represent the forefront of this development within Daoism, I believe Hsieh is right in suggesting that this widespread Daoist adaptation of Tantric ritual indicates that by the Northern Sòng, Tantric symbols and practice had come to so permeate the religious culture that they contributed to a "common cultural framework" in which Daoist and more Popular adaptations of such Tantric elements represented not so much "syncretism" as traditionally understood, nor a process of unilinear "influence," but rather the ongoing interpretation of culturally-accepted symbols into particular forms which reflected the cultural positions of different classes of ritual experts.[214]

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[212] Hsieh (《道密法圓》:10-11), citing a memorial entitled 洪州請斷袄巫奏 dated 1023, and found in 續資治通鑑長編, 仁宗凡一百卷, 卷一百一, 仁宗二, 天聖元年二,十一月.
[213] DFHY 156-168.
[214] Hsieh, 《道密法圓》, 54-8.

As developments conceived within a common cultural framework, Hsieh argues the adaptations witnessed in pioneering forms of Daoist Ritual Method[215] likely reflect developments happening primarily in more popular domains of ritual practice, where lay Tantric ritualists interacted with local cults and Spirit-mediums in southeastern China. Thus Hsieh envisions an earlier engagement between lay Tantric ritualists and local Spirit-mediums than Davis generally does, as the Southern Sòng sources which Davis employs more clearly substantiate such practices. However, Davis likewise traces the tradition of the Three Altars 三壇 to "the popularization of Tantric Buddhism after the Tang,"[216] while his study in general also sheds light on the bottom-up dimensions of the Ritual Master tradition, whereby the interactions among Ritual Masters and local Spirit-mediums witnessed in Sòng sources signaled a qualitative transformation of such relations as evidenced in earlier Táng-era Aveśa rites of possession.[217] In his history of the Tiānxīn tradition, Andersen likewise argues for similar patterns of exchange among Spirit-mediums and Daoists in 10th C. Fújiàn and Jiāngxī, while we further note that the prominent Tantric symbolism in the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ indicates precisely the kinds of popularized Tantric ritual which Hsieh proposes formed a basis for such developments in local religion.

Of the manifold developments arising from the Tantric revolution in Chinese religion, the single greatest and most consequential is surely the development of the Ritual Method movement, in which Tantric symbols and techniques acquired a new life within particularly Chinese contexts. Equipped with Tantric-derived ritual technologies adapted to subdue local spirits and overawe

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[215] Hsieh uses the term 道教法術, "Daoist Ritual Arts" to indicate essentially the same phenomenon I label Daoist Ritual Method, while elsewhere he speaks of other "密宗彩色的法術 Tantric-style Ritual Arts to label the kinds of popularized Tantric he theorizes circulated by the Northern Song (《道密法圓》,24).
[216] Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*,122.
[217] Ibid.,128.

Spirit-mediums, Ritual Masters of both Tantric-Popular and Daoist backgrounds helped facilitate large-scale cultural change by practicing in conjunction with local cults and their Spirit-mediums, thus joining centers of local religion into larger patterns of ritual integration. If, from the Sòng onward there are not institutional Buddhist expressions of the "Táng Esoteric School" 唐密 as found in Japan, aside from the different organizational contexts of Chinese Buddhism, this development reflects the fact that within the ritual marketplace of Chinese society, the legacy of the Tantric revolution has overwhelmingly passed into the traditions of the Ritual Master, where Tantric symbols and techniques continue to find relevance in lived religion.

If the history and imprint of the Tantric revolution in Chinese religion is a broad and complex subject, the roles of Tantric religion in Ritual Method Daoism and its Tantric-Popular "base" are in themselves sufficiently broad to warrant entire studies such as Hsieh Shu-wei's recent contribution, projects which can now proceed thanks to the pioneering works of previous scholars. Rather than survey the entire sweep of this history here, beyond these introductory remarks I will briefly outline a few of the most central Tantric elements which shaped the Ritual Method synthesis in general, and can be found throughout its different expressions, from Sòng-era Daoist texts to Fujianese and Taiwanese Ritual Master traditions.

Many of these elements have already been mentioned: performative techniques of mantras and mudras, iconography, and the historic subordination of local spirits to the ritual expert, which in turn helped supply a new symbolic lexicon of visually striking deities and spatially-deployed subordinates.[218] Of all Tantric-derived elements, aside from ritual coordination with Spirit-mediums, arguably the single most consequential for the Ritual Method synthesis is the technique

[218] On the subordination of Indian deities to Tantric systems, see Strickmann, *Magical Medicine*, 62-68, 201.

of identifying with an empowering deity, a practice which for clarity's sake I call liturgical identification.

Liturgical Identification: Divinization without Possession

With the emergence of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, there appears a new and highly influential methodology known in indigenous terminology as "transformation of the body" 變身(biànshén), or "transformation of the spirit" 變神 (biànshén). Andersen (2007) discusses these techniques and notes that these equivalent terms can refer "to various practices –comprising notably visualizations and spells– through which a priest may transform himself into being identical, either with the cosmos as a whole, or with the specific deity that presides over the particular method or rite that he is about to perform."[219]

Andersen proceeds to demonstrate that the former method, whereby the priest employs ritual formula to transform into a cosmic body, has numerous ancient precursors in Daoist practice, from the transformations of Lǎozi to ancient Zhèngyī rites of Lighting the Incense Burner 發爐, and Shàngqīng visualization techniques with "a strong focus on the 'cosmification' and externalization of the energies of the body of the priest." For the latter identification with a singular deity, Andersen also notes an important precursor of such practices in ritual identification with Tàiyī, "the Great one, the supreme celestial deity who emerged during the Warring States as a personification of the concept of cosmic unity or totality, and who was addressed as an alter ego of the ruler in the imperial cult of the early Han dynasty."[220] Though presaged by these ancient practices, Anderson locates the crystallization of these practices in the "early Song dynasty," where

[219] EOT 230, "*bianshen* 變身 or 變神, 'transformation of the body' *or* 'transformation of the spirit.'
[220] EOT 231.

they became "standard elements of ritual...subsumed under the heading of *bianshen.*" This was a development of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, and the principle formula for the cosmification of the priest's body given in early Tiānxīn texts is, with but minor additions, still used in the Táinán Língbǎo rite of the Jade Altar Announcement of the Memorial.[221]

Thus the indigenous term "transformation of the body (or spirit)" as found in texts of the Tiānxīn and later traditions refers to two different techniques: one involving formula depicting the transformation of the priest into an image of a sacred cosmos:

> Mine is no ordinary body, my head is like a black cloud, hair like shooting stars, my left eye like the sun, right eye like the moom, nose like a fire-bell, ears like golden bells, my upper lip the Rain Master and the lower the Earl of Wind, teeth like sword-trees, ten fingers like Merit Officials. Consecrate my left flank is the Lord of Mount Mín, my right flank the Lord of Mount Lú, my left foot General Thunder, my right foot General Lightning. Consecrate my spine as the Lord of Mount Tài, the 36 Beasts and 28 Lunar mansions respond to my body, swiftly, swiftly as the law commands![222]
>
> 吾非凡之身，頭似黑雲，髮如亂星，左目如日，右目如月，鼻如火鈴，耳如金鍾，上脣雨師，下脣風伯，牙如劍樹，十指如功曹。敕吾左肋岷山君，敕吾右肋廬山君，敕吾左足左雷將軍，敕吾右足右電將軍，敕吾脊骨泰山君，三十六禽、二十八宿並應吾身急急如律令。

But alongside these same poetic formula of cosmification there are short ritual instructions which reveal a different method whereby the Daoist Ritual Officer is to employ mudras and visualizations to transform into the Daoist's Ancestral Master:

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[221] Poul Andersen, "The Transformation of the Body in Taoist Ritual," in *Religious Reflections on the Human Body*, ed. Jane Marie Law (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1995), 192-5.

[222] 太上助國救民總真祕要 j.2, 上清北極天心正法斗下靈文符咒, 變神訣. Compare with Ōfuchi, 《中國人の宗教儀禮》, 249.

> Whenever practicing ritual and dispatching [subordinate spirits] with ritual command, first transform one's spirit, form the Root Master mudra, and visualize becoming the Celestial Master, the Emissary of the Department of Exorcism.[223]
> 凡行持遣敕，並先變神，掐本師訣，存為驅邪院使天師。

With these short instructions, a revolution in Daoism has been quietly proclaimed, ushering an unprecedented methodology into ritual practice: the direct identification of the priest with a singular deity of an individual rather than a cosmic nature.

These two methodologies are different, in both their premises and their histories, and should be distinguished in analysis, even where indigenous terminology combines them under the heading "transformation of the body (or spirit)." Thus, I will call the method of cosmification of the priest's body "liturgical transformation," and that of translation into a singular, individual deity "liturgical identification." The disambiguation of these two ritual techniques is important, as not only do they propose different ritual premises, they draw from different historical streams, with the emergence of true liturgical identification in the Tiānxīn tradition clearly marking a qualitative development beyond earlier exorcistic Daoism as found in works I consider proto-Ritual Method (in which there is no liturgical identification, nor a ritual expert called Ritual Master or Ritual Officer) such as those of the *Jīnsuǒ Liúzhū Yǐn* 金鎖流珠引 and late Táng Northern Emperor 北帝 tradition, from which the Tiānxīn tradition developed.

While many important Daoist precursors and full expressions of liturgical transformation can be found in a range of pre-Sòng sources (including proto-Ritual Method exorcistic Daoism), there really is no Daoist or Chinese prototype for liturgical identification. The closest is surely that of Tàiyī, who will in fact appear in invocations of the Tiānxīn tradition that are among, if not the

[223] Same as above, 太上助國救民總真祕要 j.2, 上清北極天心正法斗下靈文符咒, 變神訣.

earliest such seven-character stanzas which employ first-person language of liturgical identification, whereby the priest speaks as the god, not through spirit-possession, but by pronouncing the liturgy. But this development only occurs after the emergence of the Tantric-influenced Tiānxīn tradition.

In his 2007 thesis *Civilized Demons:Ming Thunder Gods from Ritual to Literature*, Mark Meulenbeld also traces certain historical backgrounds of Daoist transformation of the body techniques, and concludes that "even though techniques for body transformation previously existed in China, it seems to have been the practice of changing into one single god, such as Garuḍa, that esoteric Buddhism contributed to Daoist ritual."[224] Yet in a following discussion, Meulenbeld again takes up "Daoist ritual of body transformation by fire, termed huashen 化身 / 化神 or bianshen 變身 / 變神" and proposes to show that "this practice, thought to be one of the major Buddhist influences upon Daoist ritual...really was one of the most archaic practices preserved in Daoist ritual."[225] This is a curious turnabout, which eventually leads to further complications where he challenges Strickmann and Davis' observations concerning the nature of Tantric ritual and its profound influence on Sòng Daoism.

First, Meulenbeld begins to collapse the distinction I have made (and which he initially acknowledges) between what I term liturgical transformation and liturgical identification. This is made clear where he cites an early (though perhaps Táng rather than Six Dynasties) example of liturgical transformation in the *Chìsòngzi Zhānglì*, and concludes that "the practice of body transformation was a well-developed aspect of the early Celestial Master liturgies."[226] While no one

[224] Mark R.E. Meulenbeld, *Civilized Demons: Ming Thunder Gods from Ritual to Literature*. (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2007), 89-90.
[225] Meulenbeld, *Civilized Demons*, 103.
[226] Ibid., 159.

disputes the antiquity of such cosmic transformations, only by disambiguating methods of liturgical transformation and liturgical transformation does the relevant history come into focus.

Then he misinterprets Strickmann's arguments concerning Tantric techniques of identification by asserting that

> For Strickmann, the practices of interior homa [fire ritual] by which the esoteric Buddhist priest transformed himself into a Buddha formed no less than 'the basic premise that underlay the entire Tantric Revolution and that distinguished it from the Vedic and post-Vedic phases of Indian ritual.'"[227]

But in fact, while Strickmann identifies the role of homa fire ritual as one venue for the identification of the Tantric adept with a deity,[228] he at no time seeks to completely equate the two, as if only by homa ritual was such identification achieved. Context has been removed from the above citation, where Strickmann actually said that the *Consecration Sutra* 佛說灌頂經

> instructs the healer, who is about to use his wooden seal to cure a patient, first to *visualize his own body as the body of the Buddha*, with the thirty-two primary and eight secondary signs of Buddhahood (see p. 133). Only then, *when he has effectively turned himself into a Buddha through meditation*, can he effect the miracle of healing. This is the basic premise that underlay the entire Tantric revolution and that distinguished it from the Vedic and post-Vedic phases of Indian ritual on which it freely drew. [229]

By misinterpreting Stricmann's basic presentation, Meulenbeld then pursues an interesting but misplaced excursus in which he begins by challenging some of the most important characterizations of Sòng Daoism which had been made to date. In a bid to diminish the centrality of Tantric influence on Sòng Daoism he charges that

> Edward L. Davis, following Strickmann, maintains that the "unity of practitioner

[227] Ibid., 153, citing Strickmann *Magical Medicine*, 201.
[228] Strickmann *Magical Medicine*, 202.
[229] Strickmann, *Magical Medicine*, :201, emphasis added.

> and divinity is a defining feature of Esoteric Buddhism and a mark of the extent to which even Daoist therapeutic rituals had become 'tantricized' in the Song." Yet, if we assume that consecrating the body by an interior fire, by burning it from the inside, constituted a major ritual element that Daoism absorbed from esoteric Buddhist practices, we must also assume that this practice was foreign to China before the introduction of esoteric Buddhism in the medieval period. This, however, was not the case: there are several examples that illustrate the existence of similar techniques involving the incineration of the body actualized as a withered tree.[230]

Here, Meulenbeld has erred in his assumption that this transformation of identity inevitably necessitated "consecrating the body by an interior fire," a concept asserted neither by Strickmann, nor the canonical ritual texts of Esoteric Buddhism, in which this process is, just as in texts of Daoist Ritual Method, achieved primarily through meditational visualization in a ritual context. Hence we must credit both Strickmann and Davis for identifying these essential elements of Tantric and Daoist history, and seek to build upon, rather than distract from these key observations.

Moreover, in seeking the ultimate roots of such liturgical identification, we must look to developments in Indian religion. Geoffrey Samuel, in his authoritative work *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic Religions to the Thirteenth Century*, locates the earliest such reference to a late section of the Atharvaveda called the Vrātyakāṇḍa, in which low-caste practitioners known as vrātyas are described as engaging in a ritual process whereby the vrātya "'rouses' Prajapati and

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[230] Meulenbeld , *Civilized Demons*, 153-4. I am strongly sympathetic with many arguments made in Meulenbeld's 2007 thesis, particularly the notion first put forward by Nickerson that the subordination of local spirits began early in Daoism's history. However, throughout this and his later work, we can see how attempting to use categories of Thunder ritual and Thunder gods to designate essentially all traditions of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* and other Ritual Method compendia is very problematic, and immediately raises issues of how these relate to the Tiānxīn, Tiānpéng, and related traditions (Tǒngchū, etc.), which do not neatly fit into a Thunder ritual paradigm. As I argued at the beginning of this chapter, analytic fixation on Thunder ritual and its cognates can easily become very misleading, as these developments and their symbols are parts of a larger historical movement with both Daoist and (strictly speaking) non-Daoist, Tantric-Popular streams of practice and transmission. Within these, forms of Daoist-brand Ritual Method are by no means limited to those specifically known as Thunder ritual.

becomes Mahadeva (presumably meaning Śiva)."[231] Samuel summarizes the first part of this text as "a liturgy for the self-identification of a *vrātya* practitioner with Śiva. If read in this way, the resemblance with the much later deity yoga practices of Śaiva and Vajrayāna Tantra is quite striking."[232] Samuel later follows the emergence of antinomian ascetics called Pāśupatas from the late 4th C BCE onward, who sought attainment of "magical ritual powers that could support a career as an itinerant ritual practitioner or as part of a court ritual establishment." Samuel concludes that it was "ritual identification with Śiva that enabled the practitioner to exert various kinds of magical power."[233] Members of another ascetic movement, the kāpālikas, "saw themselves as identifying with Śiva through his negative aspect of Bhairava."[234]

Bhairava was in turn connected with classes of "frightening and dangerous" female spirits known as "yogīnīs, ḍakīnīs, and other names," who constituted an "'alternative pantheon' of dark and scary female deities associated with Bhairava." Concerning these wrathful female deities, Samuel finds that "a key element in the growth of 'Tantra' was the gradual transformation of local and regional deity cults through which fierce male and, particularly, female deities came to take a leading role in the place of the *yakṣa* deities." Importantly, these female deities were often associated with children's diseases, and thus control over them transformed them into agents of ritual healing and protection.[235] As potentially powerful subordinates to the Tantric adept, Samuel concludes that these malevolent but efficacious goddesses further encouraged the development of

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[231] Geoffrey Samuel, *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic Religions to the Thirteenth Century*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 238.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid., 243.
[234] Ibid., 252.
[235] Ibid., 246-9.

Indian liturgical identification, as the "self-identification as a deity which is a key element of Tantric practice may have originated primarily as a way of accessing divine power for ritual purposes, for example by the ritualist seeking to control a circle of fierce goddesses."[236]

Such control was often deployed for ritual healing and in many cases, such healing ritual involved spirit-possession. In his major study of Tantrism in medieval India, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*, Ronald Davidson finds that

> Because of their special capacity over ghosts and other spirits, siddhas [Tantric adepts] have become the protectors of choice against the diseases inflicted by all the ghoulish phenomena of Indian folklore....Historically, siddhas have assisted the diagnosis of diseases and provided solutions to local difficulties by means of using young children (especially virgin girls: *kumarī)* as subjects in spirit possession *(aveśa)*, practices already described in texts attributed to Amoghavajra in the eighth century. Siddhas thus used children as mediums for the control, direction, and subjugation of disease-bearing ghosts.[237]

Here we see what I believe are the most relevant backgrounds to the Indian Tantric synthesis, which coalesced around techniques of ritual identification with a deity, which in turn brought enhanced control over fierce disease spirits, and allowed for the deployment of such control through manipulation of spirit-possession in healing and other ritual.

Beyond these formative dynamics, which have clear parallels with later developments in Chinese religion, Davidson primarily advances a political interpretation of Esoteric Buddhism, in which he argues that Buddhist Tantra is primarily the product of its militarily aggressive political landscape, and above all features "the apotheosis of kings and their mandalas of vassals, with the concomitant feudalization of all forms of Hindu divinities."[238] In this "feudal" model, ritual kingship

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[236] Ibid., 270.
[237] Ronald M. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002)188.
[238] Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism,* 166-7.

becomes the "sustaining metaphor" of Tantric ritual, in which the initiate played the role of "overlord" (rājādhirāja) and was thereby identified with deities in the center of the maṇḍala, while commanding a periphery of vanquished tributary states, symbolized in the outer divisions of the maṇḍala, which were inhabited by subordinated local deities.[239]

Thus both Davidson and Samuel emphasize the ritual assimilation of local Indian deities into the Tantric adept's altar as definitive aspects of Tantric religion. Clearly this forms an important parallel with developments between Daoism and local mediumistic cults in China. Though Nickerson and Meulenbeld have argued that many subordinate spirits mentioned in texts like the *Chìsòngzi Zhāngl*ì represent subordinated local gods, despite their suggestive resemblance, it is difficult to tell if such subordinate spirits reflect entities with an independent cultic existence and Spirit-mediums, or are simply textual symbols modeled on such local gods. Even if presaged by indigenous Daoist developments, the appearance of Prime Marshals, Spirit Officers and other local deities (both symbolic and cultically independent) in Daoist systems begins only in the late Táng, and thence accelerates dramatically.[240] There can be no doubt that following

[239] Davidson summarizes his main argument by stating: "the Mantrāyana is simultaneously the most politically involved of Buddhist forms and the variety of Buddhism most acculturated to the medieval Indian landscape. Briefly, the mature synthesis of esoteric Buddhism—the form defined as a separate method or vehicle employing mantras—is that which embodies the metaphor of the practitioner becoming the overlord *(rājādhirāja).* In this endeavor, the candidate is coronated and provided with ritual and metaphorical access to all the various systems that an overlord controls: surrounded by professors of mantras, he performs activities to ensure the success of his spiritual "state." The process represents the sacralization of the sociopolitical environment, as it was seen on the ground in seventh to eighth-century India." Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism,* 114.

[240] Andersen identifies the increasing importance of subordinate spirits in the late Táng with fundamental transformations of the Daoist Jiào rite: "it is clearly the all-inclusive compensation of the (subordinate) spirits that assisted the priest in performing his tasks that constituted the rationale for adding a jiao at the end of a zhai service... A special reason for this development was the growing importance in this period of a host of new martial spirits derived from the emerging traditions of exorcism, spirits who were invited as special protectors of the sacred area in a newly-designed ritual called Announcement (fabiao), performed at the very outset of the program." Andersen, "Jiao 醮," EOT 543 .

the diffusion of Tantric ritual in Chinese society, local deities and their mediums began to become subject to priestly ritual control and symbolic subordination. The performative techniques available to Chinese Tantric adepts, which enabled them to overawe and manipulate the Spirit-mediums of local cults, reflect earlier, formative developments in Indian Tantric ritual described above, in which the practitioner identifies with a more powerful deity in order to control dangerous spirits and their mediums for ritual purposes.

Turning to a few examples from canonical Esoteric Buddhist sources, in some we find the clear imprint of transgressive Indian Tantric ritual. For example, in Taisho 1242,[241] amid extensive instructions for visualization and the drawing of wrathful deities' images, the ritual adept is instructed to smear his body with cremation ashes, use clothes taken from corpses to draw images and write deities' names, and even make offerings of "alcohol and human flesh" before the image.[242] Amid other visualizations, the adept is told to

> Sit in meditative posture and by imagination see yourself as becoming Bhairava, [in your] hands holding a hook and a rope. Then imagine that transforming out from this body, Mañjuśri appears...
> 端坐觀想己身為陪囉嚩。手執鉤及羂索。復想此身中化出妙吉祥。[243]

Thus, even in 10th C. texts of Chinese Tantric Buddhism, direct continuities with the formative contexts of Indian ritual still appear within a fully Buddhist Vajrayāna framework.[244] Other

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[241] T. 1242 佛說妙吉祥瑜伽大教金剛陪囉嚩輪觀想成就儀軌經.
[242] T.1242.1, [0206b20] 復次持明之人。於金剛陪囉嚩前。用人肉和酒誦大明. CBETA edition.
[243] T.1242.1 [0206b23], CBETA edition .
[244] Orzech identifies this as one of numerous texts translated as part of the Northern Sòng state-sponsored translation project. See see Charles D. Orzech, "Translation of Tantras and Other Esoteric Buddhist Scriptures," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, edited by Orech, Charles D, Henrik H. Sørensen, Richard K Payne (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 442.

examples are legion, and involve similar ritual instructions, such as Taisho 1272,[245] where in rites to produce rain, and involving fully Chinese Dragon spirits 龍神, after fashioning an image of Vināyaka[246]and then images of the Eight Great Dragon Kings 龍王 made with human fat,[247] the practitioner is instructed to take these images to a "dragon-pond" 龍潭 or a "place in the mountains where dragon-spirits dwell," where they should

> First, by imagination see your body as having become like the Luminous King Yamantāka. Then call that dragon [spirit's] name [and say] "I will now eat you." Not long after speaking this, great rain will immediately descend.
> 先觀想自身。如焰鬘得迦明王已。即稱彼龍名。我今食汝。如是言已不久之間即降大雨。[248]

This instance in particular helps illustrate how the technique of liturgical identification was used as a means for dominating other spiritual entities, in this case rain-producing Dragon spirits. The scope of such techniques in Esoteric Buddhis texts is extensive, involving supreme Buddhas like Variocana[249] and subordinate Luminous Kings 明王[250] among others.

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[245] T.1272 金剛薩埵說頻那夜迦天成就儀軌經. On this text, also a product of the Northern Sòng translation project, Henrik Sørensen notes that here one "encounters the practice of necromancy and necrophilia in the context of sex and magic." See Henrik Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhism and Magic in China," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Orech, Charles D, Henrik H. Sørensen, Richard K Payne (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 202. On the Sòng translation project

[246] In the lengthy and important DDB entry "歡喜天", Charles Muller reports that the "term vināyaka originally referred to a class of malignant creatures who harassed people and caused illness," with these symbols later associated with Gaṇeśa 歡喜天.

[247] 用人脂細研塗彼龍王. T.1272.2 [0312b02].

[248] T.1272.2 [0312b10]. In the preceding lines, the practitioner is also instructed to take the image to a cemetery and give it offerings of deer and pig meat, whereupon it will also produce rain.

[249] As in T. 889, 一切如來大祕密王未曾有最上微妙大曼拏羅經五卷, 卷四 : 想自身為毘盧遮那如來.

[250] Such as T.894a, 蘇悉地羯羅供養法三卷, 卷上: 默想自身如軍荼利。誦其根本真言.

Thus despite Davidson's reinterpretation of Tantric ritual within a militarized feudal paradigm, his persuasive linkages with such concepts still hinge upon the "apotheosis of kingship" and the identification of the practitioner with a superior deity who then commands dangerous, martial subordinates that execute his ritual commands. Hence, we are fully justified in first following Strickmann by affirming that the ritualized identification of the practitioner with a deity "is the basic premise that underlay the entire Tantric revolution,"[251] while further building on Davis' observation that the "unity of practitioner and divinity is a defining feature of Esoteric Buddhism and a mark of the extent to which even Daoist therapeutic rituals had become 'tantricized' in the Song."[252]

But it was not merely Daoist ritual which had become 'tantricized,' but rather an entire movement which Davis describes in detail, in which non-Daoist Ritual Masters practiced ritual methods based on such symbols as Vajra Huìjiī and the deified Nāgārjuna, Lóngshù Wáng 龍樹王, among others. Thus to adequately apprehend this overall phenomenon and the resonant linkages among its different forms, I propose we see these "therapeutic," and "exorcistic" forms of Sòng Daoism, together with the more Popular and Tantric practices from which the Daoists drew inspiration as comprising a Ritual Method movement, a revolution in ritual in which the ritual identification of the priest with a deity and the subordination of fierce martial spirits played a definitive role.

Daoist sources from the Sòng, beginning (unambiguously) with texts of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, amply demonstrate that the advent of liturgical identification was linked with a Tantric

[251] Strickmann, *Magical Medicine*, 201.
[252] Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, 125.

religious imagination. I have already mentioned how what may be among if not the earliest Daoist reference to such liturgical identification appears in a lyric stanza where the Celestial Master announces his transformation into a six-headed demon-king. In the *Shàngqīng Tiānpéng Fúmó Dàfǎ*, a likely 12th or 13th C ritual method with clear links to the Tiānxīn tradition, instructions for liturgical identification include specific depiction of how the Ritual Master is to

> Imagine that your body has four heads and eight arms, like the form of the Prime Marshal [Tiānpéng]
> 存本身四頭八臂如元帥狀[253]

However, in the more extended instructions given in Dàofǎ Huìyuán 158, the Prime Marshal is depicted with three heads and six arms, with visualizations including the details of weapons held in each of the six hands which sound very similar to depictions of the six-armed, six-legged Luminous King Yamantāka.[254] With these depictions of Tiānpéng's Tantric iconography in mind, we should recall that the earliest text of the Tiānxīn tradition, the *Tàishàng Zhùguó Jiùmín Zōng Miyào* on numerous occasions instructs the Ritual Master to "transform your body into Grand General Tiānpéng."[255] In one passage, Tiānpéng is depicted with traditional associations from the ancient Tiānpéng Invocation, but rendered in Tantric physiology:

> Imagine the Great Saint Golden Head Tiānpéng: four faces, eight arms, his body fifty spans tall, wearing golden armor, his hands holding a sword, a halberd, an imperial bell, and a divine seal.[256]
> 存天蓬金頭大聖，四面八手，身長五十丈，著金甲，手持劍戟帝鍾神印。

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[253] DFHY 159, 上清天蓬伏魔大法, 行持變神咒.
[254] DFHY 158, 上清天蓬伏魔大法, 化身為元帥行持訣. Similar depictions of Tiānpéng appear in DFHY 217. On the iconography of Yamantāka (大威德) see Hsieh, 《道密法圓》, and Flanigan (forthcoming), *The Fire Jiào*.
[255] 太上助國救民總真祕要 j.3, 祛除勞瘵眾病符訣并天蓬戡邪真法, 天蓬追鬼法并符; j.8 , 太上正法禹步斗綱掌目訣法圖文, 天師書符存功曹神將法.
[256] 太上助國救民總真祕要 j.3, 祛除勞瘵眾病符訣并天蓬戡邪真法, 天蓬救治法.

Though primarily emanating from these pioneering traditions associated with Tiānpéng, such techniques and imagery will become standard in later ritual compendia such as the *Língbǎo Língjiào Jìdù Jīnshū*, where for example the priest is instructed to

> Transform your body and become a Wrathful King with three heads, six arms, five eyes, streaming hair and armed with a sword.
> 化身為忿怒王三頭六臂五眼披髮仗劍。[257]

Though clearly conceived within the "common cultural framework" created by the social diffusion of Tantric religion, Daoist liturgical identification took numerous other deities as its subjects, most notably the Celestial Master and Zhēnwǔ,[258] but eventually many others as well, as ritual methods proliferated into the Míng.

These and other Sòng-era texts give us the earliest evidence of such techniques outside the contexts of Esoteric Buddhism. To date, the only surviving ritual manuscripts of Tantric-Popular Ritual Method traditions are late imperial and modern texts. All such traditions witnessed vigorous development throughout the Míng-Qīng, but still offer testimony of how these traditions, transmitted in proximity to but often independently of Daoist lineages, employed symbols and methods shared with these earlier Daoist forms of Ritual Method.

When we examine Lűshān ritual manuscripts from Fújiàn, we often find a patterns of reduplicated liturgical identification which recall similar sequential identifications in Esoteric Buddhist ritual manuals. In Lóngyán for example, in the liturgical manuscript of *Summoning the*

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[257] 靈寶領教濟度金書j.265, 存思玄妙品, 四開度祈禳通用, 度星存思.
[258] E.g. 太上助國救民總真祕要 j.2, 上清北極天心正法斗下靈文符咒, 變神訣: 存為驅邪院使天師. For the latter, 上清天心正法 j. 5, 變神為真武大將，披髮跣足，右手仗三昧火劒，左手乂印足踏玄武。

Southern Serpent in One Section 請南蛇一段, after an initial invitation of spirits commences what will become an extended series of transformations of identity, rendered in 7-character lyric stanza form:

> Imagine and transform,
> My body is no ordinary body, I am the spirit [dwelling] inside the Iron Dragon Grotto.
> I was born into the mortal world at the end of the Dragon Hàn [dynasty],
> born on the Upper Prime of the Jiǎzǐ year, from my clan many fierce men were born.
> When I pronounce ritual [formula, it is with] the sound of a tiger's roar.
> My brows like black clouds covering the sky with darkness,
> eyes like three-horned Thunder spirits, mouth like a fire-pan, teeth like swords,
> my belly is the Huáinán Demon-imprisoning Camp.
> On my body my garments like white clouds,
> on my shoulders hangs the Demon-eating Southern Serpent Spirit [the ritual whip].
> Perhaps in the Three Caverns with all the [spirit-] soldiers and generals,
> perhaps in the sky making the sound of thunder.
> The Great King of the Upper Grotto wears golden armor...
> I am the Iron Dragon Grotto-lord Liú,
> I grant titles to gods and destroy temples without ceasing...[259]
> 存變，
> 吾身不是非凡身。吾是鐵龍洞裏神。龍漢原末生凡世，上元甲子降生時，
> 一身出宗多猛男。說法之時虎喊聲，眉似黑雲遮天暗，眼如三角似雷精。
> 口似火盆牙似劍，肚是淮南禁鬼營。身上衣裳如雲白，肩掛南蛇食鬼神。
> 或在三洞諸兵將，或在空裡作雷聲。上洞大王穿金甲...吾是鐵龍劉洞主，
> 封神破廟不留停...

This formula exemplifies many key features of the tradition, from the orientation toward controlling local cults to linguistic techniques whereby this method of liturgical identification is achieved primarily through recitation of the liturgy itself, rather than interiorized visualizations. From here the transformations continue, with the liturgy again repeating the formula "Imagine and transform, My body is no ordinary body," followed by the Ritual Master proclaiming in short

[259] *Guǎngjì Tán* 2:218.

succession "I am the Lord of [Ritual Arts?], Spirit Èrláng 吾是述[術?]主二郎神, and again "I am the Realized Man Zhào of the Three Heavens"吾是三天趙真人. These transformations are then brought to bear on the patient's bed, which is commanded to transform into "rivers and seas" 江河河海 so that "demonic spirits have no place to make their demands (or, escape)" 鬼神無處討[逃].[260] This is a common pattern in these Lűshān healing and protective rites, where a series liturgical identifications and liturgical transformations of the ritual venue establish a kind of metaphorical momentum of ritual transformation which is then transferred to the patient in order to effect the ultimate ritual transfers which drive spiritual pathogens out of the patient's body, and often into a trap罩, well 井, prison 獄, or substitute body 替身, techniques which may be primarily symbolic or involve material media.

One of the most elaborate expressions of liturgical transformations employed alongside sequences of liturgical identification is found in the Lóngyán text for *Book of Concealing the Body* 藏身一宗.[261] Here, in a classic Ritual Master text structured around sounds of the horn, cascading formula of "Imagine and transform" 存變 by turns divinize the Ritual Master's robes, the ritual whip and sword, and eventually his bones, sinews, and even three cloud-souls and seven bone-souls. Then these transformations proceede to translate the Ritual Master into the principal spirits of his altar, beginning with the Three Matrons or Three Milk-maids 三奶, here given titles distinctive to the Wángláo 王姥 tradition:

Imagine and transform,

[260] *Guǎngjì Tán* 2:218-9.
[261] *Guǎngjì Tán* 2:178-187.

> My body is not my body, transform into the Upper Palace Controller of Evil Empress Tàiláo, Middle Palace Slayer of Evil Lady Tàiláo, Lower Palace Seducer of Evil Lady Hú Guì.
> 存變，吾身不是吾身，化為上宮治邪王太姥, 中宮斬邪太姥娘，下宮誘邪胡貴女[262]

Then some lines later,

> Imagine and transform,
> My body is not my body, transform and become the Ninth Lad of Lűshān, the Seventh Lad of Héngshān, the Tenth Lad of Màoshān
> 存變，吾身不是吾身，化為閭山九郎，橫山七郎，茅山十郎.

Followed by

> Imagine and transform,
> My body is not my body, transform into Great King Pángǔ, the Asura King, [my] left hand holds up the sun, right hand holds up the moon, illuminating [so I] see spirit-altars and Community Earth God Temples, perverse [Ritual] Masters and evil demons, they all completely lower their heads and lie prostrate on the ground, unable to move!
> 存變，吾身不是吾身， 化為盤古大王，阿修羅王，左手擎日，右手擎月，照見神壇社廟，邪師惡鬼，盡皆低頭伏地，不得動作！

Here again we find the primary orientation of Ritual Method ceremony specified as concerning spirits enshrined in local altars and temples, as well ritual warfare against other Ritual Masters, and presumably Spirit-mediums. Moreover, we see signs of remarkable continuity from the Wū-ist pantheons described by Bái Yùchán in the 12th C, as many of the Ancestral Masters and other symbols he identifies are here invoked as the Lűshān Ritual Master's alter egos, even Pángǔ and the Asura King are associated here, as in Bái Yùchán's account.[263] Together with this perhaps older stratum of symbols, the Ritual Master also invokes and embodies the Three Ladies, i.e. Chén Jìnggū and her two sworn sisters Lady Lín and Lady Lǐ, here interopreted as the eponymous

[262] *Guǎngjì Tán* 2:182.
[263] 海瓊白真人語錄 ZHDZ 19:548.

Ancestral Matriarchs of the Wánglǎo 王姥 Lűshān tradition. This text continues with still more such transformations, including into Tàishàng Lǎojūn, a trio of Prime Marshals of Capitoline Heaven 上中下界都天元帥, and the Four Great Heavenly Kings 四大天王, amid other transformations of the ritual space and ritual implements, finally ending with the souls of the Ritual Master concealed in the "33rd Heaven, behind the Palace of Tàishàng Lǎojūn."[264]

Thus we see how this Lűshān tradition has further developed techniques of liturgical identification and transformation so as to embody all of the main deities of their tradition (and no small number of subordinates), all in a way which forms a major part of the spoken (or sung) liturgy itself, rather than forming interiorized practices.[265] This movement as it were of what appears primarily as ritual instructions Daoist Ritual Method texts into the main spoken liturgy itself forms a major characteristic of many Tantric-Popular Ritual Method texts.

In this and similar examples, we see how language of liturgical identification and transformation is redeployed as a means of intensifying what would normally entail simple invocation of spirits by instead dramatizing their immanent embodiment in the transformations of the Ritual Master. Moreover, such rhythmic sequences of transformation, shifting from the person of the priest to a range of inanimate objects and ritual implements creates a metaphor of contiguous transformations which in healing ritual often climaxes by shifting the momentum of these sequential transformations onto the body of the patient, often in conjunction with material media, to expel spiritual pathogens or effect other ritual transfers. Thus the adaptation of liturgical transformation and identification witnessed in these ritual texts is, I believe, guided by the

[264] *Guǎngjì Tán* 2:187.
[265] *Jiànyáng* 851-861.

grammar of ritual, in which an intensification of the sacred forces at work is wedded to the strong tendency in ritual toward enacting objectives through contiguous steps or stages, which often involve moving between purely symbolic and materially tangible objects.[266]

While the *Book of Concealing the Body* amounts to an entire ritual composed of progressive liturgical transformations and identifications, other Lűshān texts employ a similar ritual mode of advancing ritual transformations, but with relatively more focused use of liturgical identification per se. An unsurpassed example of such imaginative transformation is the Jiànyáng-area rite depicted in the *Ritual Book of the Lady Journeying the Palaces by Night* 娘娘夜遊宮法書, a rite for domestic healing and protection in which the patient's home and family are progressively transformed into a Lűshān cosmos, all amid extensive invocation of inner and outer Five Camps 五營, and a classic pantheon of Lűshān and Daoist deities. The transformations begin by pronouncing,

> let the home entrance transform into the Grand Palace of Nāgārjua, let the menfolk transform into dragon lords, the women into dragon mothers...the main gate transform into the center of the Lűshān Main Grotto Office, the road transform into a bridge returning to and from Lűshān
> 家口化為龍瑞王大殿，男人化為龍公，女人化為龍母...大門化為閭山正洞府中心，條路化為閭山反覆橋...

After these and other ritual commands, in which even the grass and trees outside the house are transformed into "sword-mountains and sword-forests", the Ritual Master first imagines the Root and Ancestral Masters 祖本師 to his left and right and surrounded by soldiers and generals, by

[266] On the role of sequential stages in ritual transformations see Stanley Tambiah, "A Performative Approach to Ritual," Radcliffe-Brown Lecture in Social Anthropology, March 1979, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. 65 (1981): 113-169.

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reading the liturgy the Ritual Master proclaims:

> Imagine my body. My body is no ordinary body.[267] Divine King Nāgārjuna is my body.[268]
> 存吾身。吾身不是非凡身。龍瑞身王是吾身。

Though a near-continuous series of subsequent transformations are spoken into existence, they here do not entail successive re-identification of the Ritual Master with further deities, but instead continue to sanctify the home and its environs so that ultimately

> The patient transforms into a Realized Man.
> 病人化為真人

This rite continues with invocation (rather than embodiment through identification) of familiar epidemic deities (趙公明, 張元伯) among many other gods, and features continuous transformations of the patient's environment into an enchanted landscape, concluding with summons of the Five Camps and other deities (including Nézhà) to ensure the disease demons have been trapped in the symbolic Golden Well 金井. At the very end, the Five Camps and spirit-soldiers are offered reward for their labors.[269]

Hence while this rite features perhaps the densest and most imaginative use of liturgical transformations of many different kinds, and even offers a diagram depicting liturgical transformations of the body, its use of liturgical identification per se is somewhat more conventional and focused. With the deified Nāgārjuna[270] the subject of identification, and a figure

[267] Reading here the logical rather than literal meaning of the text, in which double-negatives have accumulated.
[268] *Jiànyáng* 853.
[269] *Jiànyáng* 856-7.
[270] In most Fujianese liturgical texts, Nāgārjuna is usually written 龍瑞王, instead of the more common 龍樹王.

of importance in other aspects of the rite,[271] we again see how core Tantric symbols often track with this technique, even amid imaginative adaptations.

In the Taiwanese Minor Rite, techniques of liturgical identification are on balance concentrated into two main areas: first, the use of first-person language in invocations, whereby the Ritual Master speaks in the voice of the god, and second, by means of resemblance, in which the Ritual Master employs aspects of bodily appearance, gestures, and postures to resemble their Ancestral Master. This is in fact a very widespread technique, most visible in certain Lűshān traditions where Ritual Masters dress and move in such a way as to resemble the female Three Milk-maid ladies. As this technique of resemblance is, I believe, primarily derived from the domain of the Wū or ancient Spirit-mediums, I will defer discussion to that topic.

Yet there are Ritual Masters and Minor Rite altars which employ formula of liturgical identification, though in many cases this is something of a more guarded secret, and unlikely to be written in invocation books. Daoist High Priest Zhōng Xùwǔ has told me, however, that certain Ritual Masters in Táinán County will transform into Nāgārjuna, according to his understanding because he "brings with him spirit-soldiers." This may be the case, but as we have seen Nāgārjuna is also among the most traditional subjects of liturgical identification among Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters, much as the Celestial Master is for Daoist priests. Where written methods for liturgical transformation and/or identification are transmitted in Minor Rite altars, they tend to be minor adaptations of Daoist formula, and as such are more likely to be used only in larger or more important rites.[272]

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[271] See my discussion of the Three Altars in the chapter on Integrated Pantheons, where I again raise this source.
[272] For example, this formula, preserved in the Ānpíng Miàoshòu Gōng collection reads: 祖師變身，吾師變身，仙人玉女變身，合壇官將變身。吾身本是凡身，吾為天地所生所保。頭頂日月，腳踏七星，上有華蓋，

Thus while the use of specific verbal or imagined formula for liturgical identification has somewhat diminished among Ritual Master traditions in the greater Taiwanese region, possibly the accumulated result of patterns in transmission where certain 'secrets' are sometimes withheld, the notion that the Ritual Master or Central Reverend represents or embodies the Ancestral Master or other main altar spirit is still quite common, if not fundamental. For example, in the Héshèng Táng, Ritual Master Â-T'zuee Saî 阿水師 has on several occasions stated that the Central Reverend 中尊 or Ritual Master represents Xuántiān Shàngdì or Ōng-yiá 王爺 (Wángye), the two main deities of the temple [273], both of which historically have had important Spirit-mediums.[274]

This dimension of the Ritual Master's liturgical identification moves discussion more toward the realm of spirit-mediumship and associations of identity communicated through appearance and resemblance more than ritual formula. This means of identification through resemblance is intrinsic to the entire Ritual Method synthesis, exemplified in Daoist Ritual Officer's adoption of the Spirit-medium's streaming hair (and in some cases, bare feet[275]) as a visible sign of identification with a deity. Hence such methods of resemblance, drawn from Spirit-

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下攝[躡]魁罡，左有青龍，右有白虎，前有朱雀，後有玄武，何神不使，何令不行，三十萬兵，隨吾左右，北斗步七星。

[273] By Wángye, he meant Reverend King Lǐ 李府三尊王; historically, the emergence of local deities named Reverend King 尊王 appears to be closely linked if not synonymous with the emergence of Wángye deities in Míng-era Fújiàn.

[274] The first-generation Ritual Master of the Héshèng Táng, Wáng Lú 王魯 (Ông Lo̍k Saî), claimed that he received instruction in ritual from Xuántiān Shàngdì in dreams, and was thus for him not only an Ancestral Master but a teacher.

[275] I would submit that with the issue of bare feet, we find a marker of the division between the two hemispheres of Ritual Method, with Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters more likely to perform bare-footed, while historically, though this iconography forms a central element in Ritual Method spirits, from Zhēnwǔ and Hēishà to many others, I to date can point to no ritual instructions in texts of Daoist Ritual Method which instruct the Ritual Officer to go barefoot; rather, such instructions are (primarily?) limited to loosening the hair.

mediums, and further suggested by visual parallels formed between the Ritual Master and spirit-images on the altar, further indicate how the definitive techniques of the Ritual Method synthesis represent a development of historical precursors, and not merely their adoption or syncretic recombination.

Development of the 7-character Invocation Genre in Ritual Method Texts

When examining the traditions of Ritual Method, whether in living ritual performance or in materials handed down through history, such examination presents us with a very distinctive and varied body of performative texts. Amid variety, however, certain linguistic, literary, and symbolic characteristics appear in essentially all forms and all historical periods of Ritual Method texts. As such these shared literary and symbolic features are themselves major indicators of the broad coherence and historic relations among the different streams of transmission and practice which express the Ritual Method movement. Moreover, these textual characteristics themselves directly reflect the eight or so interconnected elements which I have identified as defining the Ritual Method as a specific historical synthesis and ritual mode:

1. a pantheon of Ancestral Masters (deified Ritual Masters) or other chief spirits served by subordinate pantheons of subdued local deities and demons, including those of Indian extraction
2. techniques of liturgical identification, including by resemblance which enhance control over these and other spirits
3. deployment of subordinates to control deified humans and environmental spirits through
4. "military" metaphors, as well as legalistic procedures in order to
5. effect ritual transfers and transformations impacting the here and now, with all of these involving
6. a paradigm of embodiment, in which spirits are portrayed as having anthropomorphic bodies through which they may be controlled. Such control and command, and the overall orientation of the Ritual Method technology is in turn is linked to how the Ritual Master is

7. the primary ritual expert responsible for establishing, reproducing, and maintaining the altar and temple cults of the Common Religion, including
8. the ritual facilitation of Spirit-medium performance, as well as spirit-writing, and in many cases the training of these forms of ritual expertise.

Directly and indirectly, these characteristics have shaped the distinctive forms of language and text which one finds only in Ritual Method traditions.

At a basic level, I believe we can attribute the premises and dramatic immanence of Spirit-medium performance with the form and content of the lyric invocations which emerge with Ritual Method Daoism, and eventually become the basis of the Minor Rite invocation genre, as here we have performative hymns which order deities to descend into the ritual space, and quite often into their Spirit-mediums. In their basic purpose and outline, these invocations describe and enact a process analogous to Spirit-mediums entering trance and performing as the god, manifesting the immediate presence of the deity, who then performs further ritual operations.

This is a highly dynamic form of religious practice, and hence the lyric invocations serve to accompany the drumming and intensification of ritual atmosphere which precipitates spirit-possession, while further exemplifying the fusion of language and action which characterizes ritual as a distinct mode of communication. The language of the invocations is overwhelmingly subordinated to the objectives of ritual performance, and serves to name the deities, depict their appearance and ritual actions, as well as their subordinates, all in language constructed as illocutionary ritual commands.

Hence the fundamental contexts of these performative invocations differ markedly from the invocation of Daoist pantheons, in which inventories of bureaucratic functionaries are read, with emphasis on the image of hierarchical order they present. The Ritual Method invocations, by contrast, serve to intensify the liturgy, musically and symbolically, by dramatizing the immediate

presence of but a few immanent deities, and by depicting the ritual world of spiritual warfare by which Ritual Method ceremony effects its primary objectives of purification, healing, and protection.

To be sure, a large proportion of many Ritual Method liturgical texts involve literary forms other than the lyric invocations which have come to define the Minor Rite genre, though in Daoist sources, most such lyric formula, employing the same linguistic and symbolic conventions, are rendered in four-character phrases. But even in prose passages, the telltale symbolism, violent language, and particular kinds of iconographic depiction still mark Ritual Method liturgical texts as distinctive. Where Ritual Method symbolism has become fully integrated into a "classical" Daoist framework, as in the Táinán-area Língbǎo Jiào, the violent language and accompanying symbols, like Prime Marshals and other martial spirits, are concentrated into well-defined applications, and are not simply diffused throughout the liturgy. Hence we find that these linguistic and symbolic markers consistently reveal both the nature of Ritual Method practice, and the patterns of its historic integration into a larger Daoist framework from the Southern Sòng onward.

History of the Ritual Method Lyric Invocation

As we have seen, the distinctive literary form and symbolism of Ritual Method invocations can be traced to the original, 6th C Tiānpéng Invocation, which demonstrates the earliest and most complete example of the violent language, iconographic depictions, and description of exorcistic ritual actions that would come to define the later lyric stanzas of Ritual Method liturgy. Importantly, the same exorcistic Daoist tradition of the Northern Emperor 北帝, which Andersen has shown to be the direct sources of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, also produced what is likely one of if

not the earliest such lyric, seven-character invocation for which there is textual evidence. This invocation –also for Tiānpéng, appears at the end of a short scripture entitled the *Tàishàng Dòngyuán Běidì Tiānpéng Hùmìng Xiāozāi Shénzhòu Miàojīng* 太上洞淵北帝天蓬護命消災神咒妙經 , which given its brevity was probably meant to be used as a component within a longer, but still modestly proportioned ritual.

The invocation in question is given as a means of summoning divine assistance, and explicitly expresses many of the key features I have identified above, including commands to descend into the ritual space, with subsequent depictions of spiritual violence performed in an ongoing ritual present, rather than a mythic past, and carried out by martial subordinates and spirit-soldiers. Likewise we find the physically-descriptive language that I somewhat reluctantly refer to as "iconographic," and would prefer in some ways to label "physiographic," because in virtually all cases this physically-descriptive language is fundamentally dynamic, and used to portray the deity's actions, rather than their static appearance. Furthermore, the text features definitive conventions of literary form, where an introductory phrase of summons commences the stanza, followed by the deity's name or title. Between the ancient Tiānpéng Invocation and this one, I know of no other transitional or similar invocation which might point to patterns of development. Instead, this stanza here appears to spring fully-formed into the written record. I tentatively date this text to the 10th or 11th C., based on both its overall context and comparison with the 12th or 13th C. Tiānpéng rites in the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*[276], which reproduce this invocation, but

[276] *Supreme Purity Grand Rites of Tiānpéng for Subduing Demons* (*Shàngqīng Tiānpéng Fúmó Dàfǎ*) 上清天蓬伏魔大法, DFHY 156-168.

which appear to be later compositions, for reasons I have previously outlined.[277] With its contexts and features in mind, let us turn to the stanza itself which reads:

> I bow my head and follow the command of General Tiānpéng,
> Mighty spirit who pulverizes throngs of demons.
> Stately driving a Kuí-dragon, descend to the ritual arena,
> His stunning and mighty radiance moves Heaven and Earth.
> Bright stellar lord of the twenty-eight lunar mansions,
> Great divine king of the thirty-six generals.
> His hand holds a divine sword, slaying fiendish demons,
> Wielding a precious seal, killing spirits and demons.
> With a pick-axe he splits open all the earth-prisons,
> The shaking of his imperial bell reaches to the heavenly palaces.
> Flying thunder, lightning strikes, driving wind and clouds,
> Giant celestial armored soldiers hold pike-axes.
> The Fire Official of the Southern Dipper eliminates poisonous afflictions,
> Water Spirit of the Northern Emperor eliminates disasters.
> Subduing the great demon-kings of the Six Heavens,
> Sweeping clean the ten directions of all epidemic vapors.
> His fury causes the Sun and Moon to lose their essential radiance,
> When he breathes, mountains and rivers roil in turmoil.
> Purple pneumas rise to Heaven and descending linger,
> Three-hundred-thousand [spirit-] soldiers in dense formation ready for battle.[278]

若人啟請而說頌曰
稽首皈命天蓬將　摧碎群魔大力神
嚴駕夔龍降道場　赫弈威光動天地
二十八宿明星主　三十六部大神王
手持神劒斬妖邪　掌握寶印戮精魅
钁斧劈破諸地獄　帝鐘搖振徹天宮
飛雷掣電走風雲　巨天甲卒持戈戟
南斗火官除毒害　北帝水神滅災殃
降伏六天大鬼王　掃蕩十方諸疫氣
忿怒日月失精光　呼吸山河皆鼎沸
紫氣乘天下徘徊　三十萬兵密加備

[277] See the earlier discussion of these sources for those arguments and citations.
[278] Ibid., ZHDZ 30:122.

This stanza appears to be the, or at least among the first such lyric invocations that would in time form a prominent presence in Ritual Method liturgy of all kinds, and following further development would become the basis of the Mínnán Minor Rite invocation genre. We should in particular note such phrases as "His hand holds a divine sword, slaying fiendish demons"手持神劒斬妖邪, as such language, down to its vocabulary and phraseology, will become virtually universal among later stanzas of this kind. Moreover, most of the invocation depicts subordinate spirits and acts of ritual violence and purification. Though the specific vocabulary used here is in some ways indicative of its early provenance, these same subjects will persist as the primary content of invocations, as they express the objectives of ritual and the means of accomplishing them.

With the emergence of a mature Ritual Method synthesis in the Tiānxīn tradition, wherein we have a Ritual Officer or Ritual Master as the priest, techniques of liturgical identification (and not simply liturgical transformation), Tantric-derived symbols and iconography, and the figure of Celestial Master Zhāng as an archetypal exorcist –all features absent from the transitional, proto-Ritual Method traditions of the Northern Emperor and the *Jīnsuǒ Liúzhū Yīn*– we also find further development of this lyric invocation form, including the incorporation of liturgical identification into the text by use of first-person language. In juàn 8 of the *Tàishàng Zhùguó Jiùmín Zōngzhēn Mìyào*, a short invocation is given as part of techniques for Pacing the Steps of Yù 禹步, with instructions which read "whenever mounting [the altar] and performing the Steps of Yù, first [recite] this invocation:

> I am the Real Supreme Unity within the Cavern,
> [On my] head the seven stars, pacing the four [heraldic] spirits,
> Hand holding a metal sword, standing on the Xùn [southeastern trigram],
> Meandering I move, straight down to Kūn [the earth, southwestern trigram].
> At the gate of the Earth, Palace of Xùn, I pause to Bind-up the Altar-space.

Straight down to the Gate of Heaven, I call upon the Imperial Lord.
With three paces and nine tracks, I mount up to the bright stars,
The three disasters and nine afflictions depart from my physical form.
Swiftly, swiftly, as the Law commands!

吾是洞中太一真　　頭戴七星步四靈
手執金劍巽上立　　迤邐巡行直至坤
地戶巽宮須結界　　直至天門謁帝君
三步九跡登明星　　三災九厄離身形
急急如律令

Though tailored to accompany the exorcistic pacing techniques used to establish and purify the altar-space, this short invocation likewise exemplifies several signature conventions which will typify the later invocation genre, from what may be the earliest appearance of first-person language, in which the priest speaks as a deity, to sequential, iconographic depiction beginning with the head here moving to the hands. The phrase "Hand holding a metal sword" 手執金劍 , with but the change of one character to "hand holding a jeweled sword" 手執寶劍, will become a stock phrase in the Minor Rite invocations. This same invocation was later expanded in the *Yùtáng Dàfǎ* to include more language of purification, subordinate spirits, as well as a phrase depicting the wrathful appearance of the priest's alter-ego of liturgical identification, and transliterated Sanskrit at the end.[279]

While most liturgical verse in the texts of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ is in four rather than seven character phrases, another Southern Sòng Tiānxīn text, the *Shàngqīng Běijí Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ*

[279] 玉堂大法 j.25 ZHDZ 30:482, 步罡咒 (reading left to right):

吾是洞中太一真　頭戴七星步四輪　手把龍劒巽上立　以離巡行直至坤
震兌艮宮須結界　此中不得藏妖氛　禹步魁罡向乾亥　迤邐天門謁帝君
再乘五色升天霞　真形忿怒震天門　青宮直入充生炁　駕出蒼龍入丙丁
火赫赤天三界焰　素精煞炁列刀兵　歸來再返屯乾位　躡步七星滅怪星
天符一下災星退　天戈一損乾坤清　歸奏言功後聖君　唵嚩呪天魔吽吽順帝攝

actually begins with a remarkable lengthy seven-character stanza which was clearly meant to initiate ritual, as it commences with the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth burning away impurity in the home 宅 where the rite was to be performed:

> Southern Nine-Phoenix, spitting true fire,
> Incinerate all [impurity] in the afflicted patient's residence, the ashes blown away.
> A gust of thunderous wind and all is purified,
> Transform [this house] into a storied palace, a Golden Flower Hall.
> People and things all transform into Celestial immortal sons,
> Below the storied palace are nine sea-turtles soaring.
> The high tower wreathed in purple mist,
> A myriad rays of golden light burst forth from the Isle of Immortals.
> On four sides are the waters of the great ocean,
> Waves surging so the four quarters disappear.
> On the vast expanse of waves there is no boat or oar,
> At this moment I enter to be transported by the Heavenly Polar Constellation.
> I transform my body to become the Primal Origin, leading armored soldiers,
> Amid the mysterious darkness, the Orthodox Unity attends upon my body.
> The Four Saints, Three Officials, together with generals and bailiffs,
> The Six Dīng and Six Jiǎ [spirits] uniformly descend.
> The Green Dragon, White Tiger and Vermilion Sparrow,
> Xúanwǔ, Qílín [unicorn] Master, phoenix soaring.
> Thunder and lightning crossing and rumbling before [me] as I enter,
> I conceal the cloud-souls of my body in the clasp of the Five Dippers.
> The crimson pneumas of the Celestial Polar Constellation opens the way before [me],
> A steel net binding up above and below.
> The ten sides and eight directions are all [filled with] soldiers and generals,
> Flags and banners arrayed with the myriad soldiers.
> Clacking my teeth and concentrating my spirit, circulating my three energies,
> Reciting [this] invocation [I] slay demons and spontaneously become spiritually powerful.[280]

南方九鳳吐真火　　燒燬患宅皆灰飏
震風一吹皆清淨　　化為樓殿金華堂
人物皆化天仙子　　樓殿下有九鰲翔
戴起樓臺俱紫霧　　金光萬道迸扶桑
四面俱為大海水　　波濤湧沸無四方
洪浪萬頃無舟楫　　我方入去運天罡
化身元始領甲兵　　玄中正一侍吾身
四聖三官并將吏　　六甲六丁齊降臨
青龍白虎并朱雀　　玄武麒麟師鳳翔

[280] 上清北極天心正法 ZHDZ 30:282. On this text see TC 1067-8.

雷電交轟俱前入　　我身五斗挾藏魂
天罡赤炁前開道　　鐵網交加上下繒
十面八方皆兵將　　旂幟幢旛列萬兵
叩齒集神運三炁　　誦呪煞鬼自然靈

In this imaginative stanza we find images of transformation similar to those seen in the Lűshān healing rites previously examined, while moreover, the basic acts which commence ritual are here rendered into a lyric invocation: purification of the ritual space, transformation via liturgical identification, and the invocation of assisting spirits and spirit-soldiers. The basic steps by which essentially all Ritual Method ceremony begins have been distilled into an evocative verse which, given the conventions of Sòng poetry and Daoist ritual, was almost surely sung. Many of the specific deities invoked here, from the Four Saints of the North Pole and four heraldic animals, to the Six Dīng and Six Jiă spirits, are among the most commonly invoked symbols in Daoist and later Minor Rite ceremony, while the imagery of arrayed spirit-soldiers and generals likewise forms a definitive motif.

Moreover, all of these images, from the initial burning away of impurity and transformations of the domicile, to the Ritual Officer's act of liturgical identification, summons of subordinates, and the erection of a "steel net" are all ritual commands which in theory effect changes in the immediate ritual arena, and make possible the subsequent acts of ritual healing. Instructions which accompany this invocation specify that first, the Ritual Officer is to transform into "the King of the Primordial Origin" 化為元始王, while further executing a series of mudras and visualized transformations in concert with pacing techniques and the spraying of talisman water. Hence we see how these stanzas are constructed for enacting specific ritual aims, and integrate these

technical objectives with the literary form of a stirring lyric stanza which intensifies the ritual mood through an aesthetically vivid musical performance.

It is in rites of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* where these kinds of invocations begin to multiply, with many appearing in the Tiānpéng rites (上清天蓬伏魔大法) which exhibit connections with both the Northern Emperor tradition and the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ. For example, in *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 160, we find the same invocation (with but minor variations) examined above for pacing the Steps of Yù from early Tiānxīn texts,[281] while *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 159 gives us both the original 7-character Tiānpéng Invocation, and two new 7-character stanzas for Tiānpéng, all in the opening sections of the text. This clearly indicates the growing emphasis on such lyric invocations in ritual performance, as they are both multiplying and prominently featured in the ritual texts themselves.[282] The first is the same as the early stanza,[283] while the second two here are products, evidently, of this particular tradition.

Three 7-character Invocations for Tiānpéng in *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 159[284]

啟請咒
仰啟北極天蓬將　　摧破群魔大力神
嚴駕夔龍降道場　　赫奕威光動天地
二十八宿明星主　　三十六部大神王
手持金劍斬妖精　　掌持寶印除兇魅
鉞斧擊破諸地獄　　帝鐘搖響震天宮
驅雷掣電走紛紜　　巨天甲卒持戈戟
南斗火官除毒害　　北斗水神滅災殃
降伏九天大祆魔　　掃蕩十方諸疫癘
忿怒日月失精光　　呼吸山河皆鼎沸

[281] DFHY 160, 太乙咒 ZHDZ 37:442.
[282] DFHY 159 also has a unique 7-character stanza made by adding ritual commands to the original four-character Tiānpéng Invocation (ZHDZ 37:433.)
[283] This same invocation is again presented in DFHY 165 (ZHDZ 37:484), and DFHY 217 (ZHDZ 38:214).
[284] DFHY 159, ZHDZ 37:429-430.

紫炁乘天下徘徊　　三十萬兵俱侍衛

又啟請咒

With resolved mind I raise my head to summon the Sire of Fēngdū,
Prime Marshal of the Northern Emperor called Tiānpéng.
With might and awesome power summoning spirit-soldiers,
Sweep clean the ten directions of all epidemic diseases.
In worship I summon [you] descend into my meditative concentration,
Expel disaster, drive-away miasmas to some other place.
Following the ritual occasion, respond to my summons and descend to the Altar of Heaven,
Forsake not your compassion and come to rescue and protect.
Your servant now with one mind takes refuge in worship,
In earnest sincerity I prostrate myself in nothingness,
Wishing to command the host of Immortal Soldiers,
Seize evil demons, come and stand guard.

志心啟請酆都公　　北帝元帥號天蓬
威權赫奕召神兵　　掃蕩十方諸疫癘
奉請來降三摩地　　驅災逐沴向他方
隨機應請下天壇　　不捨慈悲來救護
臣今一心歸命禮　　披誠瀝懇叩虛無
惟願統領眾仙兵　　收攝邪魔來備衛

禮請咒

With resolved mind I raise my head to summon Marshal Tiānpéng,
Great divine king vajra with eight arms,
Emissary of the nine heavens, respond to my visualizations,
In the Seven Treasure Belvedere, become the King of the residence.
On the right and left, Generals Swallower-of-Demons and Eater-of-Ghosts,
Thunder, lightning, sun and moon, eyes gleaming bright.
Hand holding a spiritual light, striking the Northern Dipper,
Solemnly driving Kuì-dragons, holding a steel rope.
Carrying a seal of subduing demons while keeping watch,
Calling to King Black Killer who destroys the throngs of demons.
Three hundred-thousand soldiers on guard within a fog,
Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions command Celestial soldiers.
Mighty warrior of the Nine Heavens spreads open the net,
Seventy-two divisions of the mighty spirit-host.
Twenty-four Celestial Demon-killing bailiffs,
I now summon [you] to eliminate disasters.
I desire your mighty radiance to descend to the ritual arena,
Mighty warrior of Heaven, bold and fierce.
Rushing from Heaven, armored soldiers charge and stand guard,
Shaking of the imperial bell moves three-thousand realms.

The numinous sound of the ritual drum destroys the myriad demons,
Great divine King with three heads and five faces.
Four-Eyed Old Man, Lord of the Three Realms,
With awesome might, crimson cinnabar demolishes the Fēngdū underworld.
I reverently summon the Bailiffs who shepherd spirits and eat spirits,
The Bailiffs who gather-in ghosts and eat ghosts, the Bailiffs who gather in poison and eat poison, the Bailiffs who slay demons and destroy temples, uniformly arrive before my altar and take up protective guard!

志心仰啟天蓬帥　　金剛八臂大神王
九天使者應存想　　七寶觀中為宅王
左右吞魔食鬼將　　雷電日月眼光明
手把靈光擎北斗　　嚴駕夔龍持鐵索
伏魔神印執當心　　喝碎群魔黑煞王
三十萬兵持霹靂　　二十八宿領天兵
九天力士張羅網　　七十二部眾威神
二十四天煞鬼吏　　臣今啟請除災難
惟願威光降道場　　天丁力士奮威猛
天騶甲卒咸衝衛　　帝鐘搖動三千界
法鼓靈音滅萬魔　　三頭五面大神王
四目老翁三界主　　丹霞赫衝破酆都
虔請牧神食神吏　　收鬼食鬼吏、收毒食毒吏、
誅魔破廟吏、齊到吾壇皆護衛

Of the numerous points of interest raised in these invocations, first I note their form, as all commence with phrases of summons followed by the deity's name, and conclude with images of the spirits having arrived at the Ritual Officer's altar, where they encircle and protect the ritual space. In terms of content, there is an emphasis on the summons of subordinate spirits, as well as their specific ritual actions of expelling plague miasmas, slaying demons, and breaking open underworld prisons –likely a reference to mortuary rites. With the "numinous sound of the ritual drum" and the ringing of the ritual bell appearing in the stanza, we see further how imagery of the ritual performance itself is inseparable from the spiritual actions depicted in the invocation, in which repeated entreaties and commands call the gods to descend into the altar-space. Amid

iconographic depictions we also see the fully Tantric rendering of Marshal Tiānpéng, which has characterized his form since the emergence of the Tiānxīn tradition.[285]

In these same Tiānpéng rites of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*, there are least six more 7-character invocations that vary on these themes seen thus far,[286] with one in mixed meter in which a patient's illness is traced to malevolent spirits enshrined in temples, and the curses of Spirit-mediums or, perhaps, other Ritual Masters.[287] However, most of the invocations here and in other texts of the Dàofǎ Huìyuán are in four or five-character meters. But while the seven-character form allows for greater descriptive potential, the basic hallmarks of Ritual Method liturgical language are still on display, from violent language to the statement of specific ritual purposes. Examples of this kind far outnumber the 7-character stanzas I am primarily interested in tracing here, but can help illustrate the larger point. Here is one from *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 158, entitled "Invocation to Authorize General Tiānpéng 勅天蓬將呪:

> The North Pole has a general, six arms and three heads, always riding a black vapor, charging and blocking the Dipper Ox. Eyes like lightning, his body wearing black armor, going forth as an officially-titled spirit general, entering [the palace] as a Duke-Marquis, his voice like a thunderclap. His hand holds a halberd-spear, with this he cuts off the traces of perverse [spirits], with this he beheads ghosts; all which do not obey the Great Dào, swift as fire seize them and slice them to bits without mercy, one may not tarry, swiftly, swiftly as the Law commands!
>
> 勅天蓬將呪
>
> 北極有將，六臂三頭，常乘黑炁，衝塞斗牛。眼如閃電，身佩黔鋈，出封神將，入為公侯。聲如霹靂。手執戈矛，是邪斷跡，是鬼斬頭，不順大道，火急擒收寸斬毋赦，不得停留，急急如律令

Another from *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 262 simply called Invocation of Authorization 勅呪 :

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[285] See 太上助國救民總真祕要 j.7, 輔正除邪考召法, 北帝普天罩法.
[286] These others are found in DFHY 162, (ZHDZ 37:458) DFHY 163 (ZHDZ37:472), DFHY 166 (37:491), DFHY 167 , three together (ZHDZ 507-8).
[287] DFHY 167, ZHDZ 37:503.

Grand Protector of the Fēngdū Underworld, hear [my] command and move, commanding thirty-thousand troops, slaying fiendish spirits. If there be those who dare to resist, slice them to bits without ceasing, swiftly bind them and swiftly torture them, with a heavy cangue and heavy punishments, all according to the talisman command. Take possession of the youth's body. Fierce general of Fēngdū, clearly distinguish moral retribution. Swiftly, swiftly as the Law commands!

酆都太守　聽令而行　統兵三萬　戳滅邪精
敢有拒逆　寸斬無停　速縛速拷　重枷重刑
一依符命　攝附童身　酆都猛將　報應分明
急急如律令[288]

Here, a short formula for expelling a disease-demon:

I reverently summon the Fearless Grand General Sòng of the South, hand holding a fire wheel, burning demons and controlling their names, burning spirits into ashes, roasting ghosts into juice, fire spirit fire spirit, immediately go out, immediately go out, out with disease![289]
謹請南方宋無忌大將軍，手執火輪，燒鬼通名，煉神為灰，燒鬼為汁，火神火神，急出急出出疾

Or from *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 115,[290]

The Celestial Emperor gave birth to me, the Emperor of Earth bears me, the Celestial Emperor raised me, the Emperor of Earth gave birth to me, seal in my hand, invocation in my mouth, on my head the Celestial Polar Constellation, my feet treading on the Northern Dipper. The Earl of Wind and Rain Master, Sire Thunder howls, attack the temple and drive off its spirit, spirits and demons quickly run, the mighty thunderclap, thunder and lightnint follows behind, exterminating spirits and ghosts, they are transformed into fine dust.
皇天生我，皇地載我，皇天養我，皇地育我，印在我手，咒在我口，頭戴天罡，足踏北斗。風伯雨師，雷公哮吼，伐廟驅神，神鬼急走，霹靂之威，雷電隨後，誅滅神鬼，化作微塵。

Perusal of any Daoist Ritual Method compendium will yield varieties of such four-character, and mixed-meter formula in which similar violent and iconographic language appears. Likewise, there

[288]DFHY 262, ZHDZ38:472.
[289] DFHY 166, ZHDZ 37:491.
[290] DFHY 115 太極都雷隱書, ZHDZ 36:126.

are more than a few 7-character stanzas which are either not invocations at all, or share nothing in common with the invocation genre which has taken root in the broader Ritual Method tradition. For example, *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 199 commences with an extended 7-character presentation of a Shénxiāo pantheon in which the 7-character form is used to record the names and functions of deities, but this composition is not a text of ritual commands but a kind of mnemonic device, and despite the symbolic nature of the pantheon pointedly lacks the other specific linguistic characteristics I have identified as central to the invocation genre.[291]

Other important ritual formula like the two versions of the rainmaking Mùláng Divine Invocation 木郎神咒[292] are composed in 7-characer verse, and while both employ violent language to effect the destruction of drought demons and other malefic entities, such language is relatively less prominent in these long stanzas, which while embodying a general exorcistic ethos, are stylistically rather different from the genre of invocations which primarily serve to summon deities into the altar-space –and into their Spirit-mediums, which is not the purpose of the rain-producing Mùláng invocations.

However, invocations for summoning Ritual Method deities continued to proliferate in the texts of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*, and employed the same linguistic and symbolic conventions of

[291] In his study of "vernacular" Daoism, Schipper also identifies a similar 7-character text (DFHY 196, ZHDZ 38:120.) as allegedly representing vernacular Daoism, and while that text does in fact have features of vernacular language, it is not an invocation at all and is quite unlike the Minor Rite and other 7-character lyric invocations, which are not really vernacular in the first place. See the section on the Minor Rite invocations, where I revisit Schipper's vernacular thesis.

[292] These are most conveniently consulted in the *Tàishàng Sāndòng Shénzhòu* 太上三洞神咒 j.1, ZHDZ 32:691-2. I discuss this compendium of invocations below. These formula originally appear in FHYZ 6, 木郎咒; FHYZ 10 神霄上道,太乙三山大木郎神呪; 道法會元 62, 高上神霄玉樞斬勘五雷大法, 木郎咒.

earlier texts. Of these, one for Prime Marshal Zhào seems almost taken from a Taiwanese Minor Rite folio, and is found in several places in the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán,* this text from number 234:

I look up to summon the General of the Zhèngyī Dark Altar,
Prime Marshal of the Golden Wheel, General Zhào.
Thirty-six Grand Spirit Kings,
Countless [spirit-]soldiers of the Five Thunders Great Cavern.
Driving thunder and commanding lightning, illuminating Heaven and Earth,
Flying talisman destroys temples and seizes demonic spirits.
Quickly seize and swiftly bind fiendish demons and spirits,
Receive the cloud-soul, attach [it] to the body [of the Spirit-medium], transmit the meaning of affairs.
Moving mountains and uprooting trees, shaking the universe,
Holding a whip and brandishing a rope, terrifying ghosts and gods.
Seizing outlaw [spirits], assuming [different] forms, dissolving lawsuits and punishments [from the netherworld],
Rewarding the virtuous and punishing evildoers, shutting out aggrieved souls of the dead.
If people come down with the hundred diseases, inform [Me] and they will recover,
I have ten thousand vows for wish-fulfillment [which I] extend.
The Eight Kings, Fierce Generals, serve as my vanguard,
Stationed at the four quarters, great stalwarts like clouds.
The Celestial Master has an imperial command, swiftly obey!
Dispatch the troops, form up in ranks, line up the flags and banners.
[When you] hear my summons, swiftly report and respond!
On completion of your service, ascend to the heavenly terrace.
Swiftly, swiftly as the Law of the Limitless High and Bright Grand Emperor of the Universe, Elder Ancestor Celestial Master commands![293]

仰啟正一玄壇將　　金輪元帥趙將軍
三十六員大神王　　五雷大洞無量兵
驅雷役電耀乾坤　　飛符破廟捉鬼祟
急捉急縛妖魔精　　蒙魂附體傳事意
移山拔樹動宇宙　　執鞭提索驚鬼神
捉賊呈形散訟刑　　賞善罰惡禁寃魂
人遭百病告則痊　　我有萬願隨心伸
人王猛將當先鋒　　四方大力如雲屯
天師有旨速遵依　　發兵布陣列旋旗
問吾呼召急報應　　功成行滿昇天墀

[293] DFHY 234 38:327.

急急如老祖天師六合無窮高明大帝律令敕

This invocation, which is repeated elsewhere in related texts,[294] perfectly exemplifies most major aspects of such lyric invocations: the form framed by summoning the deity, dynamic iconography of the god's weapons and their use, invocation of subordinates, spiritual violence against temple deities and other spirits, plus a series of specific ritual functions, including intervening in "lawsuits from hell," healing, and spirit-possession. In a phrase, we find the moral vision of the religion in which gods "reward the good and punish evildoers," a concept of profound importance in the culture at large.

A comparison with the Táinán Minor Rite invocation reveals extensive parallels:

I reverently summon the Dragon-tiger [Mountain] General of the Dark Altar,
Grand General, Prime Marshal of the Golden Wheel.
Feet treading on the Seven Stars, General of the Five Thunders,
Five Thunders Soldiers and Horses move within a cloud.
[In one] hand holding an iron whip, subduing demonic ghosts,
[The other] hand holding an iron lock, binding up fiendish spirits.
[His Black] tiger arrives before the altar, truly manifesting,
Perverse demons and evil ghosts every last one is thunderstruck.
I am the Celestial Master, descended to practice Ritual Method.
One million celestial soldiers assist me as I go.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bow to summon,
Prime Marshal of the Dark Altar swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

HST 1:21 玄壇元帥
謹請龍虎玄壇將　　金輪元帥大將軍
腳踏七星五雷將　　五雷兵馬雲中行
手執鐵鞭降魔鬼　　手執鐵鎖縛妖精
虎到壇前真顯現　　邪魔惡鬼盡皆驚
吾是天師降行法　　百萬天兵助吾行
弟子壇前專拜請　　玄壇元帥速降臨
火急如律令

[294] DFHY 236, ZHDZ 38:340; DFHY 240, ZHDZ 38:354. Like mos such invocations in the DFHY, this one is also included in the *Tàishàng Sāndòng Shénzhòu*, j.11, ZHDZ 32:781.

As one of the most important Ritual Method spirits, summoned in virtually every Daoist and Minor Rite ceremony in Táinán, and frequently encountered in liturgical manuscripts from southern China, it is not surprising that extensive continuities of language, symbolism, and iconography appear in different formula for this potent deity.

Another deity whose summons particularly inspired composition of such lyric invocations is Prime Marshal Mǎ 馬元帥, a figure associated with the complex symbols of the Five Powers 五通, the sensationally popular and dangerously efficacious pentad of morally ambivalent spirits who are frequently worshiped under the more respectable guise of the Five Manifestations 五顯, or the Five Saints 五聖. Amid these different headings, Marshal Mǎ (or, Spirit Officer Mǎ 馬靈官, Celestial Lord Mǎ 馬天君, etc.) is frequently identified as Huáguāng 華光, and as such is sometimes counted as one of, or a collective avatar of all five of these deities, whose branching histories and contested identities are too complex to review here. What is certain is that as Huáguāng, Prime Marshal Mǎ (amid his other titles) was one of the most influential deities in the last nine centuries of Chinese religion, and represents, I believe, a particularly successful symbolic vehicle for both Spirit-mediums, and Ritual Masters. Marshal Mǎ's most iconic subordinate spirit is one Grand General White Snake 白蛇大將軍, an evocative figure who may have been a symbol of the Ritual Master's serpent-handled whip, itself the subordinated serpent-spirit defeated in myth by prototypical Ritual Masters, from Chén Jìnggū to Xǔ Xùn and Lord-of-the-Rite Zhāng. Hence the presence of General White Snake in Marshal Mǎ's ritual cult appears to echo this major theme, and may signal the Ritual Master's iconic whip.

One emblematic invocation for Spirit Officer Mǎ appears several times in texts of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*, here number 222, where a Tantric-inspired interpretation of Marshal Mǎ immediately associates him with the central of the Five Great Luminous Kings, the Unmoving Luminous King, 不動明王, an association more often made through the Daoist figure Prime Marshal Sòng.[295] Here we find not only a strongly Tantric orientation, but most of the literary and symbolic characteristics of the lyric invocation genre.

I raise my head to summon Capitoline Prime Marshal, Spirit Officer,
Unmoving Venerable of the Supreme Purity Voice of Thunder.
Manifesting across Heaven, called Fire Rhinoceros,
Quickly seize the perverse demons of the three realms.
Wrapped around his cap, the mighty and awesome White Snake,
From his arms sprout towering golden peaks.
Three heads stout and strong, manifesting a crimson radiance,
Nine eyes blazing, a killer-energy of flowery victory.[296]
A mist secures his blue body, radiance of pure color,
His body draped with golden armor, scattering cinnabar-crimson [glow].
Hand holding a jeweled sword, spitting forth a radiant effulgence,[297]
Seated astride a crimson rhinoceros, voice howling a shout.
Shaking an imperial bell, quaking Heaven and Earth,
With shaking bell and jade spear, demons and ghosts despair.
Where his ritual seal illuminates, tree-sprites die,
When his divine arrows are shot they are like a meteor shower.
With fury he sends forth the Fire Raven to burn demonic temples,
With a laughing sound the steel rope flies to bind mountain goblins.
The Eight Fierce Generals follow on the left and right,
Generals and soldiers which assist the Dào stand guard to the front and rear.
The General who Enforces the Ritual Law follows [his] directives,
Slaying and eliminating malevolent evil [beings] and rescuing the multitude of the living.
With one mind, taking refuge in the holy order I now in worship summon,
In worship summon Hum-spirit, the Divine Fire Rhinoceros.

[295] See for example DFHY 262.
[296] Here the stanza plays on names of the god, "flowery" 華 from his title Flowery Radiance 華光 (Huáguāng), while "victory" 勝(Shèng) is his traditional cognomen, with the deity often identified as Mǎ Shèng 馬勝.
[297] This image of spitting radiance appears to reference or reflect the important technique whereby a Ritual Master or Daoist priest sprays talisman water from their mouth.

Manifest thy ritual body, green face, golden eyes,
Hear not my summons and descend.
Embrace and protect me now as I perform ritual.
Urgently, as the Law of the Grand Emperor of the Purple Subtlety of the North Pole commands![298]

仰啟靈官都元帥　　上清雷音不動尊
顯應橫天號火犀　　急捉三界邪魔鬼
冠纏白蛇威赫奕　　臂生金色勢巍峨
三頭磊落現霞光　　九目輝華騰煞炁
霧鎖藍身光素彩　　身披金甲散丹霞
手持寶劍吐光芒　　坐跨赤犀聲吼哮
撼動帝鍾天地震　　鈴搖玉戟鬼神愁
法印照處木精亡　　神箭射時流星落
怒發火鴉燒鬼廟　　嘻飛鐵索縛山魈
八猖大將左右隨　　助道將兵前後衛
執法將軍從指顧　　誅除兇惡濟群生
皈命一心今奉請　　奉請吽神火犀神
青面金睛現法身　　聞今啟請願來臨
擁護我今行正法急奉北極紫微大帝律令

This remarkable stanza exemplifies the form and content most emblematic of the Ritual Method invocation genre, in which the text is framed by opening and closing language of summons, while the deity is depicted through his iconic appearance and ritual actions, which amount to spiritualized warfare on malevolent entities and their temples, carried out by subordinates, who are often depicted in spatial terms, much as spirit-images stand on altar-arrangements. Minor variants of this stanza appear elsewhere, including *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 36, where the first couplet of the second line reads "manifesting across Heaven, he is called the Five Lads" 顯應橫天號五郎.[299] This reference more directly identifies the Marshal with the ambivalent but popular Five Powers 五通, the gods most often targeted for spiritual warfare in Daoist texts, whose problematic nature

[298] DFHY 222, 38:251-2.
[299] DFHY 36, ZHDZ 36:208. A 7-character stanza for Prime Marshal Zhào follows in this same text, ZHDZ 36:209-10.

is here specifically distanced from the Daoist Marshal Mǎ, as "flying steel rope binds Mountain Goblins" 飛鐵索縛山魈, for these spirits (山魈 Shānxiāo) are likewise connected with the Five Powers. Hence the "good" Daoist Marshal Mǎ is shown subduing these same figures which indicate his more ambivalent and dangerous interpretations. Moreover, we note the various ritual implements depicted here show the god as a Ritual Master, ringing the ritual bell and using a ritual seal to exorcize pathogenic spirits, while holding a sword and spraying a "luminous effulgence" completes the picture of a Ritual Officer performing in his altar-space.

The importance of Marshal Mǎ in his various incarnations is further revealed by a scripture in the Zhèngtǒng Míng Daoist Canon, of the type which will become increasingly common throughout the Míng, in which a ritual scripture for a Popular deity is featured in Daoist ritual, and which often begins with or otherwise includes one or more 7-character lyric stanzas for summoning the god and their subordinates.[300]

Likewise, numerous scriptures of Zhēnwǔ (who in the Míng becomes known as Xuántiān Shàngdì) also begin with such invocations, one of which is repeated in two scriptures, and has close parallels in the late imperial Minor Rite texts. This text is quoted from the scripture entitled *The Celestial Venerable of the Primordial Origin Preaches the Wondrous Scripture of The True*

[300] 大惠靜慈妙樂天尊說福德五聖經,ZHDZ 6:269-271. (TC 1225). The invocation reads
仰啟靈官大元帥　福德華光五顯王
錦袍繡帽威容猛　火劍金鎗聖力強
天下正神功第一　佛中上善世無雙
玉宸殿畔登珠幌　金色臺邊建寶幢
破洞封山魈魅絕　興風走電鬼邪亡
化導萬民垂福祐　保安九域去災殃
焚香奉請虔誠禮　願賜恩光降道場
(ZHDZ 6:269)

Warrior of the North 元始天尊說北方真武妙經, which opens with this "Invocation of Summons" 仰啟呪:[301]

> I raise my head to summon the great saint Xuántiān Shàngdì,
> Perfected spirit of the northern rén-guǐ [water element].
> Realized Venerable of the Golden Imperial Gate, respond with thy transformation body,
> Unsurpassed general called the True Warrior.
> With a mighty visage, awe-inspiring Lord of the Supreme Yīn,
> The arrayed constellations of Xū and Wēi apportion [your] energies.
> Two eyes with flashing lightning subdue the throngs of demons,
> A myriad horsemen like clouds awe the nine regions of the earth.
> In purple robe and golden belt hung with a divine sword,
> The Celestial tortoise and giant serpent pay homage at the Saint's feet.
> The Six Dīng [spirits] and Jade Maidens follow on the left and right,
> The Eight Killer Generals stand guard before and behind.
> Eliminating disasters, sending down blessings, unimaginable.
> With one mind, taking refuge in the divine command I now in worship bow
>
> 仰啟玄天大聖者　北方壬癸至靈神
> 金闕真尊應化身　無上將軍號真武
> 威容赫奕太陰君　列宿虛危分秀炁
> 雙睛掣電伏羣魔　萬騎如雲威九地
> 紫袍金帶佩神鋒　蒼龜巨蛇捧聖足
> 六丁玉女左右隨　八殺將軍前後衛
> 消災降福不思議　歸命一心今奉禮

The similarities with other such invocations should by now be readily apparent, and even the specific formula of summons which frame the invocation are becoming somewhat standardized in these Daoist sources, as are certain phrases such as how ranks of subordinates "follow on the right and left" and "stand guard before and behind." Though not directly cognate, one frequently used Táinán-area Minor Rite invocation for Xuántiān Shàngdì shares numerous phrases with this canonical stanza.[302]

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[301] ZHDZ 30:522.
[302] HST 1:5 玄天上帝 (right to left):
謹請玄天上帝爺　北極壬癸水明旗　敕奉真君號真武　威鎮北極展真行

Remarkably, this exact invocation is found in a Wǔlíng Jiào 五靈教(Five Spirits School) liturgical manuscript from Lóngyán, the *Dà Kāitán* 大開壇 (*Grand Opening of the Altar*), in which we find many other canonical Daoist invocations for the Four Saints of the North Pole. The 7-character stanza is near-verbatim, and taken together this particular rite is almost totally devoid of the strong hybrid tendencies which appear, for example, in the very next Wǔlíng Jiào manuscript in the *Guǎngjì Tán* collection.[303] Thus we find a possibly rare example where these exact canonical sources have been transmitted into living traditions, and preserved somewhat intact and even distinguished from the other liturgical texts of the tradition, in which strongly hybrid, Tantric-Popular symbolism prevails. Such evidence further indicates how Daoist-brand Ritual Method traditions have, for the most part, been absorbed into Lǘshān-type Ritual Master traditions in many parts of southern China, and only rarely survive as independent lineages.[304]

Interestingly, several couplets from this scriptural invocation for Zhēnwǔ appear to be preserved in an invocation for Bǎoshēng Dàdì in Ānpíng, suggesting that this stanza for Zhēnwǔ, or derivatives of it, came to be directly incorporated into the text for Bǎoshēng Dàdì.[305] Such

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披頭散髮騰空起　黑旗展起鬼神驚　左手寶劍斬妖精　右手勅旨救萬民
左有英勇康元帥　友有忠良趙玄壇　蒼龜赤蛇朝真武　六丁六甲左右隨
吾法北方壬癸水　押去南方火精神　弟子壇前專拜請　玄天上帝速降臨
火急如律令

[303] The 五靈通表一宗, which presents a classic, hybrid pantheon with Wáng Tàiláo, an avatar of Línshuǐ Fūrén, plus other Lǘshān figures, at the top of the pantheon alongside high Daoist divinities, starting with the Three Pure Ones. See especially *Guǎngjì Tán* 135-138.

[304] It appears that the traditions in Húnán studied by David Mozina represents an example of what I label non-hybrid, Daoist-brand Ritual Method, though I have not examined their liturgical materials to judge clearly. Another example of essentially pure Daoist-brand Ritual Method can be seen in the set of ritual materials from Chóngqìng published by Hú Tiānchéng 胡天成 et.al. (1999), 四川省重慶市巴縣按龍區：訣罡密譜彙編.

[305] From the Miàoshòu Gōng invocations, with shared lines underlined (right to left):

醫龍吳真君
仰啓醫龍吳真君　觀音菩薩永化身　昊天無極作醫王　毫上陰光號諸降
靈符變化江河海　一扶神水真妙濟　六丁六女左右隨　八煞將軍前後位
親賜江黃二仙官　救諸苦難免災殃　四海眾生永大會　消災降福不順宜

textual circulation points to the larger phenomenon at work here, in which these kinds of invocations were hardly the reserve of Daoist-brand Ritual Method, but were the product of a much broader movement in which Ritual Masters of every kind were, from the Sòng onward, composing and performing with such lyric invocations as a prominent feature of ritual. Moreover, such composition and ritual performance was clearly not sequestered within sectarian groupings, despite comptetitive pressures and the Daoist rhetoric of ritual war on the "perverse Wū." Rather, symbols, texts, and ritual techniques were clearly circulating among performers aligned with both Daoist and Tantric-Popular domains of Ritual Method.

From the vantage of Daoist sources, there is a visible trend in which these scriptures for Popular deities, as well as later portions of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* increasingly feature such lyric invocations, a trend further displayed in texts of the 1607 *Wànlì Xù Dàozàng* 萬曆續道藏 (*Wànlì Reign-period Sequel to the Daoist Canon*). Of the several texts in this late Míng project which have such invocations, the most emblematic are those for Spirit Officer Wáng 王靈官 and his master, the prototypical Daoist Ritual Officer Sā Shǒujiān 薩守堅, which all together form a large proportion of the scripture for this major deity,[306] who is portrayed in narrative as the demonic City God subordinated by Sā in an archetypal myth which established the image of the Daoist Ritual Officer.[307] This scripture has a 7-character stanza for the Realized Man Sā 薩真人 as well, where he is called the "Azure-cloud Grandmaster of the Teaching" 碧雲大教主. Like all such invocations, this one for "Sire Sā" 薩公 exemplifies the now more or less standardized form and general content

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皈命一心將敬請　　醫龍真君顯真形

[306] 太上元陽上帝無始天尊說火車王靈官真經, ZHDZ 32:684-687.

[307] See the biography of Sā in the 歷世真仙體道通鑑續編, j.4 薩守堅, ZHDZ 47:602-3.

of the genre, while further specifically mentioning spirit-possession and healing among the ritual purposes of his summons.[308]

In this scripture for Spirit Officer Wáng of the Fire Chariot 火車王靈官真經, there are two invocations given for the god, one longer stanza of summons, and a shorter one for "urgent summons" 急啟請咒, a condition which further underscores the ritual utility of this scripture, nearly half of which is dedicated to presenting these invocations and other, linguistically similar ritual formula.

Two invocations for Spirit Officer Wáng in his late Míng Daoist Scripture[309]

靈官啟請咒	
仰啟神威豁落將	都天糾罰大靈官
火車三五大雷公	受命三天降鬼祟
手執金鞭尋世界	身披金甲顯威靈
綠靴風帶護身形	雙目火晴耀天地
頃刻三天朝三帝	須臾九地救生民
銀牙鳳嘴將三千	雨首貔貅兵百萬
走火行風前後衛	穿山破石捉妖精
祈晴禱雨濟世間	附體圓光通事意
治病驅邪如電閃	收瘟攝毒伏群魔
飛騰雲霧遍虛空	號令雷霆轟霹靂
三界大魔皆拱首	十方外道悉皈依
我今啟請望來臨	大賜雷威加擁護

急啟請咒	
手執金鞭駕火輪	腰纏龍索怒雙睛
黃巾朱髮連環甲	風帶藍袍列護身
何勞妙手圖吾像	但願君心合我心
指揮五雷傳號令	妖邪鬼魅化微塵
我今啟請望來臨	大賜雷威加擁護

[308] Invocation for Sā Shǒujiān from 太上元陽上帝無始天尊說火車王靈官真經, 啟請誓咒 (ZHDZ 32:686, reading right to left):

仰啟碧雲大教主	一元無上薩仙翁	先天雷 部大尚書	親授鐵師傳妙旨
手執五明降鬼扇	身披百衲伏魔衣	常將鐵鑵食加持	普濟含靈皆得度
咒棗書符皆有應	代天宣化總無私	雲遊天下至龍興	鐵面將軍潭底現
一十二年觀過錯	百千萬種積功勛	妄把誓盟朝上帝	普令三界悉皈依
治病回生如返掌	開光附體闡威靈	我今啟請望來臨	伏望師恩加擁護

[309] 太上元陽上帝無始天尊說火車王靈官真經, ZHDZ 32:686.

Again we see the stable form and conventions of the invocation genre, from the formula of summons to the dynamic, iconographic language, spiritual violence, subordinate generals and soldiers, plus the depiction of specific ritual objectives, here including praying for rain and shine, spirit-possession, and ritual healing. In the shorter, "urgent summons" we again find the classic phrase of ritual command whereby demons are "transformed into fine dust" 化微塵.

Elsewhere in the Wànlì Sequel Canon, there is an invocation for the City God in his dedicated scripture,[310] while in similar scriptures of the Zhèngtǒng Canon, we find for example two

[310] 太上老君說城隍感應消災集福妙經 ZHDZ 6:263
開經偈
稽首皈衣城隍尊，　　威靈烜赫鎮乾坤。
護國安邦扶社稷，　　降施甘澤救生民。
統轄大兵巡世界，　　賞善罰惡日同明。
正直公忠判生死，　　禍淫福善闡威靈。
虔心欽奉消夾障，　　家道平康國土清。
真經開演我今誦，　　願賜恩光普降臨。

such stanzas for Māzǔ,[311] and one for Wén Qióng 溫瓊, aka Prime Marshal Wén, in which yet again the short scripture opens with the invocation itself.[312]

While there are still many more such examples from the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* and other canonical sources, these examples amply illustrate the major points I wish to make here. We can now see that a particular style of 7-characer invocation first appears in a short scripture for Tiānpéng somewhere around the 11th C., and then developed most notably in Tiānpéng rites

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[311] 太上老君說天妃救苦靈驗經, ZHDZ 6:260-262.

仰啟劫封號無極, 仁慈輔斗至靈神。
威容顯現大海中, 德廣編施天下仰。
護國救民無壅滯, 扶危救險在須臾。
或遊天界或人間, 或編波濤并地府。
邪魔鬼魅總歸依, 魎魎妖精皆潛伏。
變凶為吉如彈指, 賜福消灾若珍微。
凡人有禱捧金爐, 一切歸心從懇禱。
啟請咒

奉請三天都總管 九天遊奕不曾停
上聖天妃功護國 勑封靈惠衛朝廷
頭戴花冠乘鳳輦 身披鞏服仗龍形
東列西華排鬼將 南征北討助神兵
劍佩斗牛光凜冽 簡書勑命掃妖精
威容顯現人欽仰 心運慈悲雨露均
救民護國施恩德 祛害除災利澤興
威德周圓通上界 垂慈降世度群生
山河社稷永安鎮 雨順風調保太平
散影分輝遍三界 人間天上日月明
天龍鬼神咸恭敬 奉勑皆令達上清
我今誓願永受持 一心歸命奉真經 (ZHDZ 6:260)

[312] 太上說青玄雷令法行因地妙經 (ZHDZ 32:688).
仰啟青玄地雷令 長生正氣丙丁神
冥心皈向欽然至 亦髮青面顯威靈
金甲火袍晃耀日 應祈隨禱現真形
翊靈將軍號昭武 掌握風雷統領兵
助法救民興善利 代天行化大慈悲
集福消灾驅疫痛 除邪輔正掃妖氛
勝功妙果讚無窮 稽首皈依誠奉禮

related to the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, and from origins in the same developmental milieu which produced the earliest Ritual Method forms of Daoism, this particular style of lyric invocation then grew to be increasingly common in other Ritual Method-related texts in the Míng Daoist Canon. Though other, linguistically similar invocations in 4-character meter numerically predominate in Daoist Ritual Method compendia, a general trend appears by the Míng in which these 7-character stanzas, now exhibiting a stable form, vocabulary, and style, increasingly appear in ritual texts and scriptures dedicated to Popular deities, where these invocations are frequently foregrounded at the opening of the text itself, or otherwise make up a sizeable portion of certain short scriptures. In other words, these invocations had visibly grown in importance, popularity, and number by the mid-Míng, a trend continued into the 17th C.

This pattern and others linked to it are clearly embodied in one of the last texts compiled for the 1445 Zhèngtǒng Daoist Canon, the *Tàishàng Sāndòng Shénzhòu* 太上三洞神咒 (*Divine Invocations of the Supreme Three Caverns*).[313] This easily overlooked text represents an important series of developments in Daoism, as my research reveals that its contents are nothing less than a compilation of virtually every invocation from the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* and *Fǎhaǐ Yìzhū*, extracted from whatever rites they originally appeared in, and placed into what is clearly meant to be a practical manual of invocations, now liberated from the specific altar set-ups and particular ritual contexts of their original texts. The *Sāndòng Shénzhòu* then organizes these invocations topically according to general ritual objectives, from rites for rain or shine, to healing and the summons of subordinates, among many others. This signals that at least some Daoists were employing these ritual formula within their own altar-traditions and altar-opening procedures, rather than

[313] ZHDZ 32:690-789.

following the detailed instructions for very specific rites and altar-pantheons in the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*. This might help explain what happened to all the rites of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*, as the major symbols and deities clearly remained important while the specific rites themselves appear not to have been transmitted down to the present, and may have fallen into disuse by the late imperial period.

As a practical manual, the *Sāndòng Shénzhòu* was meant to fulfil a practical purpose: to facilitate the convenient practice of Daoist-brand Ritual Method ceremonies of every conceivable kind, but in a flexible way unencumbered by other instructions or ritual guidelines (even talismans are omitted, though many invocations are presented for their consecration), as these instructions and altar-pantheons were clearly seen as unnecessary to Daoists who had their own ritual systems, and simply wanted a handy reference manual of ritual invocations. The labor of extracting all of these invocations from the texts of the *Dàofǎ* Huìyuán and Fǎhaǐ Yìzhū and combining them into one volume points to a handful of important phenomena. First, it indicates that especially by the fifteenth century, certain Daoists at least saw these formula as the most important, most valuable, and most useful parts of the vast ritual compendia from which they were extracted.

As my research of the Táinán-area Fire Jiào has shown, for example, the prose liturgy of this one-day rite was not based on any canonical precursors, despite the availability of such texts in the Míng Canon. However, the main part of the Fire Jiào is structured around three invocations which have been taken or adopted from material in these same Ritual Method compendia, including the *Sāndòng Shénzhòu.* In fact, one invocation for Prime Marshal Dèng has been composed specifically for the rite, I believe, by rendering material from *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 57, and made into a 5-character lyric invocation according to the conventions of the genre as I have presented here. This shows how Daoists have tended to regard these invocations handed down

through the tradition as more important, as they amount to the ritual commands which effect obtainment of ritual objectives, while in the case of Marshal Dèng's stanza further illustrating that there was ongoing demand for lyric invocations to summon Daoist Ritual Method spirits, and that when these were composed, they followed the same general template by which these other Daoist invocations have been written.

Thus at one level *Sāndòng Shénzhòu* was perhaps meant to meet a demand among Daoist practitioners, operating in the Ritual Method marketplace of the early and mid-Míng. But the production of this practical manual may also point to the competition these Daoists faced in the ritual marketplace, and this same competition may have also played a role in the compilation of the Ritual Method compendia from which it was composed. Judging by fieldwork from southeastern China, including the liturgical texts collected from ritual practitioners, it appears that by the late imperial period, and perhaps much earlier, the ritual marketplace had become dominated by practitioners of Tantric-Popular and hybrid forms of Ritual Method.

Though historical conditions are now difficult to clearly gauge given the large-scale disruption of traditional religious culture, it appears that even within a radius of say one week's journey from the Celestial Master's seat at Lónghù Shān in Jiāngxī, in a majority of local communities, temple and healing rites were more likely to be conducted by Ritual Masters whom I designate Tantric-Popular, practicing a range of Lűshān and related traditions, including many with a more Buddhistic orientation. This is not merely the result, I believe, of late Qīng and 20th C. history, but reflects a long-term pattern wherein Tantric-Popular Ritual Method traditions became integrated into local mediumistic cults at an early stage, and were instrumental in the waves of institutional expansion that occurred during the Southern Sòng and again in the middle

and late Míng, when economic prosperity and other factors stimulated rapid innovation and development of deity cults and their social infrastructure. This long-term relationship is directly embodied in the integration of Ritual Master symbols into the temple cult itself, such as the Five Camps, and in Mínnán regions, the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar.

Hence, when the Daoists who edited and produced the Míng Canon surveyed their world, they were faced with a situation in which cities and villages were filled with the very "perverse Wū" 邪巫 that Daoist ritual texts regularly condemn and target with counter-magic. Thus it seems that in the 15th C., the editors of the Míng Canon faced an opportunity and a challenge: there was a hot marketplace for Ritual Method ceremony –involving temple deities, spirit-possession, healing, weather-controlling rites and more, but there was stiff competition in this marketplace from the kinds of Ritual Masters that Bái Yùchán mocked in the Southern Sòng, and who had continued to proliferate in parallel with the expansion of temple networks and cultic institutions from the Southern Sòng onward. Ironically perhaps, such Tantric-Popular Ritual Master traditions were further enhanced in many ways by their adaptations of prestigious and efficacious elements of Ritual Method Daoism then circulating in society, including through the circulation of texts.

Thus it seems plausible that these dual considerations of market opportunity and the threat of being out-competed by the hated Wū served as stimuli to the production of texts and practical manuals that would equip Daoist Ritual Officers with ready-made Daoist-brand Ritual Method systems, and thereby offer an alternative to the flourishing realm of Red-Headed, Tantric-Popular Ritual Method, whose sounds, sources tell us, rang out in every walled city and rural township of Fújiàn.[314] Whatever the case, it appears that in most locations, the Red-Headed Ritual Masters

[314] See chapter 4.

largely triumphed in the competition over community and healing ritual, while in the process the clearly robust Daoist presence, as marked by Daoist symbolism, texts, and ritual techniques, was in many (if not most) cases drawn into the stronger gravitational pull of the Red-Headed lineages, where a social and symbolic fusion took place, resulting in the hybrid lineages witnessed across the region.

My investigation of the 7-character lyric invocation began from the question of how the Táinán-area Minor Rite invocations took shape and acquired their distinctive form, in which a set of literary and symbolic conventions serve as a template for composing invocations as needed, a process which continues to the present. I believe that in terms of historical origins, this survey of invocations in Daoist sources demonstrates that stanzas which are structurally, linguistically, and symbolically comparable to the Minor Rite invocations emerged within Daoist sources as I have described above, and that interaction among Daoist and Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters through the venue of local cults is the primary dynamic whereby the invocation genre developed and became disseminated throughout the different traditions of the Ritual Method movement.

This process of interaction and exchange likewise raises the possibility that what we find in the Daoist sources are, in some respects, responses to developments arising primarily within more Popular contexts. This might help explain how the first 7-character invocation for Tiānpéng appears to spring fully formed in or around the 11th C. Moreover, though canonical sources of Esoteric Buddhism definitely feature iconographic and sometimes violent language, in Esoteric Buddhist sources language does not reflect the kinds of phrasing, rhythmns, and applications, nor the linkages with ritual commands, which can all be traced to the original 6th C. Tiānpéng Zhòu 天蓬咒. Hence in lieu of other evidence it appears that it was primarily the textual and ritual legacy

of exorcistic Daoism, reinterpreted by Daoists in increasing contact with the immanent deities, compact pantheons, and performative rhythms of spirit-possession which produced the lyric invocation genre.

Invocations in Lűshān and other Tantric-Popular manuscripts

The clarity and durability of the 7-character lyric invocation is further demonstrated by its adaptation to produce stanzas for deities indigenous to purely Tantric-Popular contexts. In the Lűshān ritual manuscripts published by Yè Míngshēng and John Lagerwey, we find many such invocations, sometimes collected into specific volumes but more commonly distributed within specific liturgical texts. One good example is an invocation for Vajra Huìjī found in the Lìyuán volume, used at the beginning of ritual for the consecration of the talisman water used to purify the altar-space:[315]

> I raise my head to summon Great Vajra Huìjī,
> Hand holding a jeweled cudgel, eliminating perverse demons.
> Feet treading on a fire-wheel, flames joining with Heaven,
> Forming a mudra before his chest, invocations [consecrating] the ritual water.
> I bow to the Dharma, the Buddha and the Sangha, I bow to the Root Master Śākyamuni Buddha whose transformation body is Great Vajra Huìjī.
> Spiritual power manifesting, subduing perverse demons,
> Assist me and consecrate the ritual [talisman-] water in this cup...
>
> 仰請金剛大穢跡　　手持寶杵除邪魔
> 足踏火輪焰連天　　結印當胸咒法水
> 南無[法佛僧]南無本師釋迦牟尼佛化身穢跡大金剛
> 神通顯現降邪魔　　助吾盂中咒法水

[315] Lìyuán 472-3, from the *Rite of Binding-up the Altar-Space* 結界科儀. This same formula used again on 479.

This short stanza perfectly embodies the form and conventions of the lyric invocation genre, though joined here at the end with a longer formula that follows for consecrating the talisman-water. Even here we see how the immediate ritual objective is depicted twice in the invocation itself, demonstrating the fusion of language and gesture which characterizes ritual itself, and which enables ritual acts –including speech acts– to enact transformations in ways categorically different from ordinary language and technical activity. Of further note is the identification of Huìjī as the transformation-body of the Śākyamuni Buddha, a concept attested by other historical sources, including Bái Yùchán in his discourse on Yoga 瑜伽 Ritual Masters.[316]

In his recent study of Tantric and Daoist ritual, Hsieh Shu-wei has published another invocation for Huìjī from a text of a late imperial Yoga 瑜伽 lineage entitled *Rite for the Summons of All Buddhas* 諸佛啟請科, in which these same literary and symbolic conventions are employed:[317]

> I summon Great Huìjī Vajra,
> Vast spiritual power, unimaginable.
> Three heads, eight arms, subduing demons,
> Shattering Mount Sumeru, it transforms into fine dust.
> A bold light shimmers, illuminating the sun and moon,
> From his mouth he shouts, moving Heaven and Earth.
> Withered trees sprout blossoms unknown to humans,
> Hand holding a jeweled sword, slaying fiendish spirits.
> From his mouth he pronounces invocations of the Tathāgata [Buddha],
> Epidemic yakṣas are completely eliminated.
> Division commander King Brahmā and Indra,
> Celestial Kings of the six directions follow on the left and right.
> Bowing in worship before the golden incense burner I summon the transformation body of Śākya[muni] Huìjī, Precious Saint, King Venerable, come and descend.
> 啟請金剛大穢跡　　神通廣大不思議
> 三頭八臂伏降魔　　打碎須彌化微塵

[316] 海瓊白真人語錄 j.1, ZHDZ 19:549
[317] Hsieh (2018:126). A 4-character invocation follows which employs further iconographic language and ritual depictions of Huìjī physically restraining demons, and taking hold of people's cloud-souls.

毫光燦爛照日月　　口中嘬唱動乾坤
枯樹生花人不識　　手持寶劍斬妖精
口中開言如來咒　　瘟疫夜叉盡消除
部令梵王並帝釋　　六方天王左右隨
金爐下拜請釋迦化身穢跡寶王尊聖降臨來

This stanza likewise exemplifies the form and conventions of the 7-character invocation genre, here employed to depict the classic Tantric iconography of Huìjī with "three heads and eight arms," one of which, at least, "holds a jeweled sword" with which he "slays fiendish spirits," a stock phrase found in many Minor Rite invocations. Though here applied to Mount Sumeru, a likely reference to subduing Śiva, we find that classic epitome of violent language found throughout Daoist Ritual Method texts, in which ultimate destruction entails being "transformed into fine dust." The elimination of "epidemic yakṣas" likewise indicates a general ritual objective, here rendered in a consciously Tantric idiom, with the Indian local deities, rather than indigenous Chinese ones, identified as the source of plague. So too the subordinates, which despite their Indic and Buddhist identities(in fact all are subdued "Hindu" gods), are depicted in language taken straight from Daoist invocations as "following on the left and right."

Indeed, such invocations for Daoist divinities appear among these same Lűshān manuscripts, including those of the more Buddhistic Lìyuán traditions in Shòuníng. One manuscript for the important procedure known as Gathering-in Shock 收驚 includes a small collection of invocations, including this one for Zhēnwǔ, in which some changes of meter may either indicate a partially corrupt text, or indicate specific shifts in the melody:

I welcome and summon the Black Emperor Spirit of the North,
[His] transformation body Great Ancestral Master Zhēnwǔ.
Body and head standing fiercely in a black cloud,
Among ferocious generals, he is number one.

Hand holding a demon-subduing seven-star sword,
Feet treading upon a long serpent and an eight-trigrams tortoise.
His body ten thousand spans tall, hair streaming about his head,
A myriad fierce generals all come to greet him.
Practicing and studying ritual, awesome spiritual power,
Saving the myriad living beings in the unstable [mortal world].
To the left the Green Dragon, on the right the White Tiger,
In front the Crimson Sparrow, behind, the Dark Warrior.
Leading Celestial soldiers to the front,
Directing soldiers and horses to guard Heaven and Earth,
The Six Rén generals spread out a black net,
The Six Jiǎ generals spread out a black cloud.
Guarding the north in Heaven,
His head carrying the three terraces, inhaling [the energies of] the seven stars.
I am the Black Emperor of the North,
I recite the primal [origin] of Heaven and bring blessings and benefit.
Abbeys, halls, monasteries and Daoist temples are all established,
My divine invocation manifests awesome spiritual power.
Thirty-six generals and marshals,
I authorize and consecrate [them], manifesting awesome spiritual power.
Malevolent spirits of the upper realm all flee,
Perverse demons of the lower way all transform and vanish.
If there be any perverse [spirit who] does not submit to my ritual,
Seize them and with a stroke of the sword transform them into fine dust.
I honor the invocation of Ancestral Master Zhēnwǔ of the Northern Dark Heaven,
Swiftly, swiftly as the law commands.

迎請北方黑帝神　　化身真武大祖師
身頭猛立黑雲中　　威猛神中為第一
手執降魔七星劍　　腳踏長蛇八卦龜
身長萬丈頭散髮　　萬般猛將盡來迎
行行學法威神靈　　即在沈浮救眾生
左青龍右白虎　　前朱雀後玄武
帶領天兵前頭去　　指回[揮]兵馬鎮乾坤
六壬將軍佈黑趙[罩]　六甲將軍佈黑雲
鎮守北方天上　　頭戴三台吸七星
吾是北方黑帝　　吾念乾元享利貞
庵堂寺觀諸成立　　吾神咒顯威靈
三十六員諸將帥　　吾敕旨顯威靈
上界凶神急急走　　下道邪魔走化亡
若有一邪不伏法　　攝來劍下化迷塵
吾奉北方玄天真武祖師咒，急急如律令。

While this slightly unusual stanza clearly employs vocabulary and cadences reflecting its local milieu, still it has been composed according to the same general conventions visible throughout the genre, while featuring the distinctive iconography and symbolism of "Ancestral Master Zhēnwǔ" common to all his representations. In this same short manuscript there are also 4-character invocations for Huáguāng which likewise employ all the standard techniques of iconographic depiction and spiritual violence. Here, with his iconic "golden brick" 金磚, Huáguāng "wildly beats perverse demons unto death" 金磚亂打邪魔成亡.[318] The canonical 4-character invocation for Tiānpéng's companion Tiānyòu follows in the text.

In nearby Jiànyáng, Lűshān manuscripts likewise contain many such invocations, mostly distributed throughout other liturgies. For example, one short stanza invokes a "Black-faced Spirit-Officer," who appears to be related to Prime Marshal Gòu 苟元帥, the Daoist-brand incarnation of "The Great Black Deva" 大黑天, the Hindu god Śiva as portrayed in his subordinated role within Esoteric Buddhism.

> Black-faced Spirit Officer, black spirit,
> Fire-head of spiritual power, of stunning appearance.
> Left hand holding a golden brick, casting it ten-thousand spans,
> Triangular golden-brick, left hand [grasping a] demon.
> Five hundred fire-ravens fly darting and shimmering,
> One fierce dragon laughing, echoing sound.
> When the golden brick is thrown, the gate of heaven opens and descends,
> Black Faced Spirit Officer, come and descend.
> 黑面靈官黑靈靈　　火頭神通好驚人
> 左手金傳交萬丈　　三角金磚左手魔
> 五百火鴉飛閃閃　　一條猛龍笑响响
> 金磚撥開天門降　　黑面靈官降臨來

[318] *Lìyuán,* 696.

This brief stanza displays a much more popular linguistic style than we have yet seen, but still adheres to the general form and premises of such invocations, while appearing to conflate a range of symbols, from Huáguāng's triangular golden brick, to the image of "fire-head," which may in fact be drawn from associations with Vajra Huìjī.

In Lóngyán we again find many such invocations for important deities, some embedded in longer liturgies, with a few others collected into one small volume simply entitled *Invocation Scroll* 咒語卷.[319] Most of these invocations likewise illustrate how these same general conventions were employed in creative and adaptable ways to compose lyric summons for major deities, from the Three Pure Ones and Celestial Master Zhāng to important Ancestral Masters, multiple avatars of Chén Jìnggū, the Five Fury Spirits, among other notable symbols. While some of these particular stanzas offer more quasi-narrative material than is found in either the historic, Daoist invocations or the Táinán-area Minor Rite texts, even here depictions of ritual actions and spiritual violence predominate. One representative example is this stanza for the Madame Chén, aka Línshuǐ Fūrén:[320]

> I burn incense and bow to summon
> Protector of the dynasty of mighty spiritual power,
> Granted authorized title "Favorable Grace," Lady Chén.
> At twenty-four she took refuge in the cavern-office,
> Commanding crack troops, a hundred-thousand men.
> On the water she raises soldiers to drive off perverse ghosts,
> She blocks the door of the Southern Mountain Five [Powers] temple.
> She originally was from Fújiàn, Gǔtián County,[321]
> The flame of her single incense-burner is handed down through a myriad families.
> If someone has difficult childbirth or disaster,
> Recite my invocation before the altar.
> In worship I summon the Lady of the Imperial Palace to come and descend.

[319] *Lóngyán* 2:473-478. Typeset text of these appears in Lóngyán 1:78-181.
[320] *Lóngyán* 2:476.
[321] Here, and throughout these Lóngyán manuscripts, written 苦田 rather than 古田.

焚香拜請
當朝護國有威靈　　敕封順懿陳夫人
二十四年歸洞府　　押領精兵萬萬人
水上揚兵驅邪鬼　　塞出南岳五廟門
化身元是三山苦田縣　　一爐香火萬家傳
若有產難並災厄　　誦吾神咒到壇前
吾奉皇宮夫人降來臨。敕到奉行火急如律令

Here we begin to see references to temple worship for the alleviation of personal misfortune, an image which the Táinán-area Minor Rite invocations frequently employ. Most prominent is the martial language of spirit-soldiers, a common theme in virtually all such formula. Spiritualized violence, as always, also figures prominently, as in the stanza for the incarnation of Madame Línshuǐ known as Wánglǎo 王姥, the eponymous deity of this particular tradition, who it is said "on horseback throws sabers and dances with a sword, the heads of ghosts fall to the ground in a raining tumult" 馬上拋刀並舞劍, 鬼頭落地亂紛紛.[322]

In the *Summons of the Southern Serpent in One Section* 請南蛇一段, numerous 7-character stanzas appear amid prose invocations and sequential acts of liturgical identification, which are also dramatized through 7-character verse. One representative passage summons a notable Lǘshān deity Marquis Zhào:

I burn incense and bow to summon Marquis Zhào Āndǐan,[323]
Year by year, month by month, he goes out to roam.
On his head he wears a cloud-cap, its shadow covering Heaven,
His feet step with the 'Beautiful-water' boots of the Third Lad.
Three Southern Serpents follow the turnings of his body,
His head ten-thousand spans tall, eyes like silver.
He pauses to make a bamboo horse and a golden [ritual] whip,
With a white cloth in his hand he makes a golden bridge [to summon spirits],
Before and behind are immortal lads and jade maidens,
Throwing sand, striking stones, marching ahead.

[322] *Lóngyán* 2:474.
[323] Phrasing difficult, reading this as the deity's name.

Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Reverend Lord Marquis Zhào come and descend.
焚香拜請
趙侯尊案典　年年月月出遊行
頭戴遮天影雲帽　　腳踏三郎麗水靴
三條南蛇隨身轉　　頭高萬丈眼如銀
竹馬金鞭須直造　　白布手中造金橋
前後仙童並玉女　　拋沙打石向前行
弟子壇前傳拜請　　趙侯尊主降來臨

In this stanza, Marquis Zhào is depicted as a Ritual Master, fashioning his own ritual whip, while the serpents that accompany him are the spirits of the whip itself. Moreover the "golden bridge" made of cloth refers to a common ritual practice where a strip of cloth is hung over an altar to create or symbolize a bridge across which spirits move when summoned and dismissed.[324] Of particular note here is the penultimate couplet "Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon," as this verbatim phrase is likewise the standard line in this position in Táinán-area Black-Head Minor Rite altars.

While many more examples exist in the Lűshān texts of northern and western Fújiàn, these illustrations suffice to demonstrate that even amid local innovation and adaptation, the Ritual Masters who composed these invocations employed many of the same basic literary and symbolic conventions found in earlier Daoist Ritual Method texts, while further expanding the invocation genre to feature even more specific references to temple worship and particular symbolism associated with various deities.

In the three large volumes of ritual texts published by Yè Míngshēng and John Lagerwey, there are many other kinds of texts written in 7-character verse which are rather different from the

[324] The bamboo horse appears to be another ritual prop, possibly a messenger or emissary.

kinds of invocations which I have sought to explore here. Some are more narrative in nature, and in many cases are not really invocations or ritual commands. While the extensive material in these other kinds of texts constitutes important genre of popular performance literature, and are clearly relevant to understanding those particular traditions, I am not here seeking to account for every kind of 7-character verse found in ritual texts, but rather to trace the history and nature of the kinds of invocations that come to form the basis of the Minor Rite genre in the Mínnán littoral.

This historical inquiry has revealed a broad and consistent pattern of textual production among different Ritual Master lineages in which performative stanzas meant to summon deities into the altar-space have been composed according to a set of literary and symbolic conventions traceable to the transitional, proto-Ritual Method scripture *Tàishàng Dòngyuán Beǐdì Tiānpéng Hùmìng Xiāozāi Shénzhòu Miàojīng* 太上洞淵北帝天蓬護命消災神咒妙經, in which elements of the ancient Tiānpéng Invocation have been developed into a 7-character form marked by a set of distinctive features: iconographic depiction of deities cast in tandem with spiritual violence, descriptions of subordinate spirits and their ritual acts, and reference to ritual objectives, all set in a rhythmic musical mode which quickens the ritual atmosphere and dramatizes the immanent presence of the deity. These literary conventions were then further developed by early Ritual Method traditions connected with Tiānpéng, from whence they began to proliferate in ritual texts.

To find canonical invocations such as the one for Zhēnwǔ examined above in manuscripts transmitted by Lűshān lineages clearly demonstrates that exchange among Daoists, with their text-intensive tradition, and these Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters served as the primary means whereby these kinds of invocations –and their ritual systems in general– developed. Thus, when looking at Daoist-brand Ritual Method sources, we find Tantric symbols, local deities, and Spirit-

mediums throughout, while in the texts of Tantric-Popular traditions, there is no place one does not find the imprint of Daoist symbolism, Daoist ritual, and Daoist textual practices. From the symbols of the Five Camps themselves to many other structural elements of ritual such as the Emissaries of the Three Realms, we see that among the ostensibly non-Daoist Ritual Master traditions which I have labeled Tantric-Popular, there is none in which elements of Daoism do not play a fundamental role in shaping the most basic contours of the ritual system. Likewise, there is no Daoist Ritual Method without Tantric and Popular elements. While we may be able to identify the movements and evolution of certain symbols across textual traditions, what these movable symbols indicate is an overall phenomenon shared by both Daoists and their competitors, and that the entire phenomenon has been engendered by patterns of exchange. It is not a case unilateral influence from one to the other, but of an ongoing process of mutual "resonance" which arose from within a common cultural framework, to again borrow Hsieh Shu-wei's phrase. In this shared ritual world, marked by intense competition and a rhetorical culture war, forces of opposition and competition were encircled by a wider culture of ritual practice that in the Ritual Method synthesis produced a common symbolic idiom commensurate with both temple religion and, eventually, Daoist lineages as well. In this synthesis, the domestication of Tantric ritual and symbols, together with evolving methods of ancient Daoist exorcism intersected around the gravitational center of the religious culture created by immanent local gods manifest through Spirit-mediums. From this historic convergence there emerged patterns of opposition, competition, imitation and collaboration, all of which are visible in the texts and ritual arrangements developed from the 10th C. onward.

Chapter 2: Integrated Pantheons of the Regional Religious System: The Daoist Jiào Altar, the 36 Official Generals, and the Three Altars

Introduction

The religious synthesis of the Mínnán littoral, preserved and developed most fully now in the greater Taiwanese region, represents the product of a long historical processes whereby traditions of the more Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method came to directly influence the cultic structure and ritual life of the temple-cult itself, while the Daoist priesthood, equipped with their own Daoist-brand Ritual Method symbolism, increasingly performed rituals in and for community temples. By this development, the more expensive and elaborate Daoist rites stimulated temple organization to mobilize the resources necessary for these rites, which in turn enacted a Daoist ritual cosmos as encompassing and ordering the religious world of community temples. In this ritual and symbolic world order, the cosmic and sidereal symbols of the Daoist celestial administration, together with the Daoists' own mediumistic and demon-quelling Prime Marshals were shown through ritual as presiding over and authorizing the networked deity cults of local society.

This position of symbolic dominance was further secured through an ongoing challenge to the orthodoxy of local cults epitomized in the premises of Daoist Ritual Method, which took ritual warfare against unrecognized or unconverted local deities as a core principle. This spiritual, ritual, and rhetorical war on the deified dead represented a re-intensification of ancient Daoist theodicy, but now retooled from the Five Dynasties onward with the armaments of the Ritual Method synthesis, which specifically equipped Daoist Ritual Officers with a performative technology and symbolic paradigm to engage, overawe, and subdue the spirits and Spirit-mediums of local cults. The inflexible modes of "classical" Daoist ritual based on imperial court ceremony and the

submission of written documents pointedly lack these performative and symbolic elements which would enable engagement and interaction with entranced Spirit-mediums. Hence even to this day, whenever Daoist priests perform ritual involving possessed Spirit-mediums or spirit-sedan chairs, they always and necessarily perform such rites in the Daoists' capacity as Red Headed Ritual Master.

Thus through both the prestige offered by its high cultural-capital value, and the challenge posed by exorcistic skepticism toward local cults, from the early Sòng onward, the performance and symbolism of Daoist ritual increasingly came to establish a higher-order, supra-local dimension of ritual integration over and among the cultic altars and temples of the Common Religion, a symbolic and liturgical order that I will call a Daoist ritual cosmos, a general religious order in which the human and environmental deities of local cults are, by the late imperial period, overwhelmingly oriented toward and authorized by the symbols and rites of the Daoist priesthood.

The territorial cults of the Common Religion are immanently terrestrial in their spatial premises and world-affirmative ethos. The deified human beings and environmental spirits enshrined in its altars are not only beings native to the human realm, their cultic altars are specifically linked to the nested spatial boundaries of human settlement: homes and their domestic cults, precincts and village boundaries, village alliances. From the early Míng onward, a hierarchy of village Shè 社(Community Earth Gods) and City Gods of each county, prefecture, and province formally established the administrative units of the empire as ritual precincts defined by these community cults. The spiritual power of the gods is likewise primarily concentrated at their ancestral temples, or other important cultic sites, thus emphasizing how sacred geography and physical proximity (by pilgrimage and the movement of spirit-images) to sacred sites plays a

fundamental role in the construction of sacred power. At the microcosmic level, these spatial relationships relative to focal points of spiritual power are articulated in the altar-space, temple building, and temple precinct.

Meanwhile, other spirits such as those of mountains and streams, or sacred trees and rocks likewise represent spiritual entities in the extended environment contiguous with that of human habitation, and thus do not constitute a separate realm of "nature worship," as nature and its ostensible symbols are never reified into a distinct concept or ritual protocol in the culture. Instead, these religious symbols, including spirits that guard agricultural fields and the like are regarded as inhabitants of the extended terrestrial environment, no different from those within city and township precincts. So too the predatory fox, turtle, and snake spirits, together with the vengeful dead buried in the earth and the environmental entities known as Killer-spirits 煞, who primarily inhabit the soil and buildings, all afflict the living with disease and misfortune, often, it is believed, through soul-capture, and thus form the principle antagonists and main problem to be solved by religious practice, though as members of this same continuum of spiritual entities, temple gods too are often blamed for such soul-snatching predations as well. Thus at many levels, the Common Religion is a religion of the earth and its symbols, an orientation reflected in not only its world-affirmative objectives, but in its specific symbolic premises and practices.

Standing over this earth of human and environmental gods is a Heaven which, from the stars of the North and South Poles around which the earth turns, to the very sky itself, personified as the Lord of Heaven 天公, are all explicitly Daoist. In the formal practices of temple worship, local temples are overtly oriented toward these Daoist symbols as expressed in the Lord of Heaven, aka the Jade Emperor, and his special temples, the Lord of Heaven Temple 天公廟. The Lord of

Heaven Temple and its modular proxy, a towering rear temple addition known as the Jeweled Palace of the High Firmament 凌霄寶殿, are patterned after the Daoist Jiào altar, and present the symbols and deities of a Daoist Heaven as presiding over the human and environmental gods enshrined in domestic and temple altars. Nor is it that these celestial and cosmic gods are simply understood by ordinary people to be Daoist. Aside from the Jade Emperor, who is depicted in the imperial garb of a Chinese emperor, the other deities of this Daoist Heaven: the gods of the North and South Poles, and the Three Pure Ones at the apex of the ritual cosmos, in all temple statuary and painted scrolls these gods are depicted as Daoist priests. The Lord of Heaven and his explicitly Daoist institution are acknowledged as presiding over the temple gods in every act of temple worship by every worshipper who lights incense in a temple. As such, these customs directly indicate how Daoist rites and symbols are universally recognized as presiding over the territorial cults of local society.

Since Kristofer Schipper and Kenneth Dean first argued for the special role of Daoism in organizing local temple-cults into a "Daoist liturgical framework," advocates of this theory have mostly made general indications of how this is so, with the performance of the Daoist Jiào for community temples rightly identified as the primary means whereby the theological organization of local cults within a Daoist ritual cosmos is enacted and reproduced. However, often in lieu of more concrete arguments, other scholars have countered that Daoism is not alone in providing a higher-order superstructure for community religion. Dean himself, in light of his research on the Three-In-One traditions in the Pǔtián region, later came to propose that local cults be acknowledged for their capacity to exist within "multiple liturgical frameworks."[1] Given the great

[1] Dean and Zheng, *Ritual Alliances*, 50-1.

variety witnessed among regionally-negotiated religious ecosystems, such a readjustment helps accommodate the adaptations and historical contingencies at play in different regions, where differently configured and differently-named ritual traditions officiate community rites. But the apprehension and analysis of such variety must first be tempered with proportionality, so that relative outliers and minority cases do not unfairly minimize or detract from strong tendencies. Moreover, analysis must press beyond the names and labels of ritual traditions and engage the specific symbols and ritual elements involved, so that a change of names and traditions, from say that of Zhèngyī to Lǘshān does not lead to oversimplified conclusions, or obscure important patterns, including those of the variables at play.

For example, where self-described Buddhist traditions (which I label Buddhistic) studied by Tam Wai-lun perform Jiào for local communities, closer examination reveals that such Jiào still rely upon Daoist ritual structures, such as the Announcement of the Memorial, while much of the ritual content, despite the "Buddhist" label, is in fact Red-Headed Ritual Method of Three Milk-maids 三奶 traditions.[2] While Tam labels these traditions "Popular Buddhism" 民間佛教, I argue that in fact they are better understood as Buddhistic manifestations of Tantric-Popular Ritual Method, as their ritual content draws far more extensively from these Ritual Method traditions than from ritual programs of monastic Buddhism,[3] while like all forms of Ritual Method,

[2] Tam Wai-lun 譚偉倫「中國東南部醮儀之四種形態」，《歷史人類學學刊》 第三期，第二卷(2005 年 10 月): 131-156;「從粵北英德『喃嘸』醮儀看民間佛教」，民俗曲藝 163 (2009:3): 71-115; "Exorcism and the Pu'an Buddhist Ritual Specialists in Rural China," in *Foundations of Daoist Ritual: A Berlin* Symposium, ed.Florian Reiter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 137-149.

[3] For an excellent presentation of Buddhist ritual programs from the Sòng and Míng, see Daniel B. Stevenson, "Buddhist Ritual in the Song," in *Modern Chinese Religion I: Song-Liao-Jin-Yuan (960-1368AD) Volume 1*, ed.John Lagerwey and Pierre Marsone (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 328-448.

substantial Daoist elements likewise feature prominently in the ritual structures and symbolic makeup of these Buddhistic liturgical systems.

Thus, a simple reliance on the ostensible names of ritual traditions involved does not necessarily indicate the limits of a so-called Daoist liturgical framework, but may instead indicate its varieties. A large proportion of such regional variations involve what I label as a hybrid of Lŭshān(-type) and Zhèngyī traditions, in which such lineages enact a strongly Lŭshān-style Daoist ritual cosmos in community ritual, where the high gods of the Daoist Inner Altar are still featured atop the entire system, while other Daoist symbols permeate the liturgy, alongside those proper to the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method.

The notion of a Daoist ritual framework first arose from Schipper and Dean's research of Mínnán-speaking regions of Táiwān and southern Fújiàn, where Daoist and Red-Headed (Tantric-Popular) Ritual Master traditions are more clearly distinguished, and thus offer an alternative to the tendencies toward hybridity which prevail in the Fujianese interior and beyond. In the Táinán region, which exemplifies the cultural traditions and relations of the commercialized Mínnán littoral, a number of important structural patterns obtain among local temples and the symbols of both "classical" Daoism and the Tantric-Popular Ritual Master tradition, patterns which have not been sufficiently noted or explained in previous studies of religion in this region. In hopes of moving toward a clearer image of these arrangements, I will here present an outline of the ritual and symbolic integration among temple cults, Daoism, and Tantric-Popular Ritual Master traditions in the Táinán region, though certain elements of this integration, such as the cult of the Five Camps, have been discussed elsewhere in this study.

A prominent feature of this integrated ritual order is what we might call its variable perspective frame. When the Jiào is in full swing, the Daoist gods and Daoist priests naturally loom largest, but at other times the temple gods and their Spirit-mediums occupy the foreground, with the Daoist divinities receding like high peaks in the background, where they stand as reference points, giving depth to the composition. When the Ritual Master and Minor Rite troupe take stage to reproduce elements of the temple cult, to maintain its sanctity, or to facilitate Spirit-medium and spirit-writing performance, then the particular importance of Ritual Master ceremony in engineering temple religion becomes clear, though on an ordinary day of temple worship, only clues to this role may be visible in the small images of the Five Camps and ritual whip, enshrined on the left-hand side of the altar. When these same Ritual Masters, Minor Rite troupes and Spirit-mediums perform rites of healing, protection, and fortune-boosting for people, then we see how the symbols of the temple cult and Ritual Master's altar are brought to bear on the bodies of individuals, thus placing worshippers in center stage for a time. Thus, amid the extensive integration of Daoist, Ritual Method, and Popular cultic symbols, the apparent magnitude of each varies according to the occasions of ritual performance, their purposes, and venues.

To appreciate these patterns of integration we must begin with a slightly revised interpretation of the Daoist Jiào altar itself.

The Daoist Jiào Altar: Apex and Interface of the Daoist Ritual Cosmos

The Jiào, in its various forms, represents the culmination of a temple community's ritual life, and involves maximum mobilization of resources from both within the host-temple precinct and

all of its precinct-alliance temples. There are direct relationships between these lateral precinct alliances and the Jiào, as the sponsorship and execution of the Jiào cycle is primarily organized through these alliances, while the formal participation of each allied temple in the Jiào forms a major item in the ritual program, a fact which has completely escaped all previous depictions of the Daoist Jiào in Táinán City, just as the existence and importance of these precinct alliances themselves have also gone almost entirely unnoticed. While the liturgical year and major life events of allied temples all involve the formal participation of the other temples in its precinct alliances, all such participation climaxes with the performance of a Jiào, where the mobilization of resources and manpower is raised to the highest level.

The focus of all this activity and pious anticipation is the Jiào altar, erected within the host temple. For the duration of the multi-day rite, the temple will sealed off from the general public and transformed into a fully Daoist sacred space, in which the main gods of the temple are symbolically removed from their seats as host and placed at the door of the temple facing in, like a temple-worshipper in the place of guest or supplicant. This arrangement, in which local gods have become incorporated into Daoist ritual, represents a major historical development, as Daoists originally castigated local gods as demonic ghosts whose worship only brought disease, ruin, and premature death.[4] Only by the long interaction of Daoism with the mediumistic deity-cults of local society did forms of accommodation begin to crystalize within Daoist traditions, notably by the increasing subordination of local deities into the lower ranks of Daoist pantheons, where they (and their symbolic proxies) came to serve as Prime Marshals and Spiritual Officers, martial guardian

[4] Strickmann, *Magical Medicine*,3-5.

spirits at the focus of new, exorcistic traditions which, in their mature Sòng forms I characterize as Daoist Ritual Method 法.

Parallel to the emergence of these martial forms of Daoist Ritual Method in the Sòng, Daoist compendia from the period reveal that rituals were increasingly performed within local temples on behalf of these local gods and their communities.[5] In the process, the Daoist altar was gradually transformed from earlier, perhaps idealized models with neither Prime Marshals nor local gods, into eventually the late imperial and modern Jiào altar witnessed today in which the Prime Marshals of the Ritual Method dominate much of the ritual space, and stand guard over the multitudes of local gods whose spirit-images always outnumber human participants in the Jiào itself. However, the original and ancient opposition between the deathless divinities of the Dào and the deified dead of temple cults is still preserved as a basic structural feature of the Jiào altar, with local deities ideally placed opposite to and thus farthest from the Three Pure Ones 三清, who sit at the apogee of the Daoist ritual cosmos.

[5] For example, many ritual documents collected in major Sòng-era compendia specify the ritual as directed toward a certain temple's precinct, with variable formula in many documents to accommodate for "such-and-such god, such-and-such temple" 某廟某神 . Examples are extremely numerous; for but a sampling see 靈寶領教濟度金書 j.3, 聖真班位品, 一開度祈禳通用, 監臨幕神位; 靈寶領教濟度金書 j.4 聖真班位品, 二開度祈禳通用, 醮班聖位, 左班; 靈寶領教濟度金書 j.294, 表榜規制品, 二開度祈禳通用, 二 / 言功朱表; 靈寶領教濟度金書 j.295, 表榜規制品 三明真齋用, 九天言功表; 靈寶領教濟度金書 j.298, 表榜規制品, 六青玄齋用, 青玄言功表; 太上三洞表文 j.1, 青玄言功表; 上清靈寶大法 一, j.64, 齋法章奏門, 牒當境諸廟; 上清靈寶大法 一 j.64, 齋法章奏門, 發公牒符使關; 上清靈寶大法 一 j.66, 文移雜用門, 三官考功狀; 上清靈寶大法 二 j.39, 散壇設醮品上, 黃籙大齋醮謝真靈三百六十位. This major pattern whereby Sòng-era Daoists began performing Jiào and related rites in and for local temples of the Common Religion marks the clear establishment of ritual precedent that within a range of variation prevails throughout most of traditional southern China and diasporic communities to this day. However, as with essentially all issues regarding the historical relationships between Daoism and local cults, any mention or acknowledgement of this important history, as well as the ancient oppositions among Daoists and mediumistic local cults are almost entirely absent from virtually all Chinese-language scholarship on these subjects.

Though adaptable to fit the available space, and subject to relatively minor variation among different lineages, the Jiào altar has a basic structure that fully depicts a Daoist ritual cosmos, with this same structure expressed in the liturgical sequence of the Daoist Invitation of the Spirits 請神(啟白). Thus there is a spatial axis of elevation and purity running from the apex of the altar at the Three Pure Ones to the outermost, and therefore lowest perimeter of the altar where local gods sit to "Observe the Jiào" 鑑醮. This same spatial axis is reproduced in the liturgical sequence whereby deities are invoked from high to low in the Invitation of the Spirits, with clear demarcations among groups or classes of spirits which parallel the framed sequences of painted spirit-image scrolls 掛圖 in the hierarchical altar-space.

The Jiào altar can be divided into four basic areas:

1. The Inner Altar 內壇:

Here sit the high Daoist divinities, with the Three Pure Ones 三清 in the center, flanked on either side by the Jade Emperor 玉皇大帝 and the "Lord of the Myriad Asterisms," the Grand Emperor of the Purple Subtlety 紫微大帝. Andersen aptly labels these "emperors," and notes their appearance is modeled on that of Hàn-dynasty imperial sovereigns.[6] When space permits, other high gods are also sometimes represented here, most often the Empress of the Earth 后土地祇 and Emperor of Heaven 天皇上帝; in the past, the Celestial Venerable of Universal Transformation 普化天尊 and the Celestial Venerable Who Saves from Suffering 救苦天尊 were also displayed here as well, though now these two, who represent power over life and death respectively, are more likely to appear in the funerary version of the Daoist altar. Regardless of whether they are represented by altar-scrolls, all of the gods which can be enshrined here are invoked together at the beginning of the Daoist Invitation of the Spirits ceremony, in the same descending order that governs the spatial placements of their images.

[6] Poul Andersen, "Ritual Scrolls of Chen Rongsheng of Tainan, Taiwan." Unpublished paper, 2009, 19.

2. Representations of the Daoist Celestial Bureaucracy

Beneath the high emperors are the bureaucrats who serve them and implement their directives. There are usually four altar-scrolls hung in this position, and while the specific images are subject to variation, all represent departments of the Daoist celestial administration with their assembled deities, who are often shown as facing toward the inner altar, in audience with the high emperors enshrined there. One common motif are the Four Departments (or, Prefectures) 四府, comprising realms of Heaven 天界 and Earth 地府 (on the "dragon" side, or the right when facing in), with realms of Water 水府 and the Sacred Marchmounts 嶽府, (or sometimes the Bright World 陽間[7]) on the opposite "tiger" side. Other images are hung in this placement as well, as with the Shànhuà Daoist Altar. In their standard arrangement, the innermost pair on the left and right were described by High Priest Zhōng Xùwǔ as representing "the Myriad Spirits in Audience with the Origin" 萬神朝元, while the next pair outward are the Thunder Department 雷部 and Fire Bureau 火部, respectively. While the Thunder Department represents exorcistic deities proper to the next section of the altar, in the Invitation of the Spirits, the Fire Bureau and Department of Epidemics are invoked in the section of the liturgy which corresponds to this section of the altar, and since these scrolls depict these deities as administrative departments, these factors appear to have determined their assignment to this position.[8]

3. Prime Marshals of the Ritual Method

Beyond the bureaucratic departments come the domain known as the Outer Altar 外壇, home to the martial spirits of Sòng-era Ritual Method Daoism. Taking the Shànhuà

[7] The Bright World 陽間, or World of the Living, is an assembly of regionally prominent Popular deities of (primarily) the official Registry of Sacrifices, and usually features Māzǔ, Guān Gōng, the Three Lady Milkmaids, Spirit Officer Mǎ and the Five Manifestations among others, usually with some subordinates. The organization of these deities into what amounts to a bureaucratic department represents perhaps the most official incorporation of Popular deities into Daoist pantheons visible in virtually any Daoist liturgical system. However, this scroll is on balance more likely to appear adjacent to the Altar of the Three Realms 三界壇 toward or at the outermost perimeter of the Jiào altar

[8] Ōfuchi 259

Daoist Altar as my model, in the first pair of scrolls on the right and left we have the Four Saints of the North Pole 北極四聖, with Tiānpéng 天蓬 and Tiānyòu 天猷 on the (right-hand) dragon side, while on the (left-hand) tiger-side are Zhēnwǔ 真武 and the Black Killer 黑煞. Next are four Prime Marshals, with Kāng 康 and Gāo 高 on the dragon side facing Zhào 趙 and Wēn 溫 on the tiger side. Farthest out (in this particular arrangement) are the pair Red Robe 朱衣 and Golden Armor 金甲, spirits whose paper images often guard ritual spaces, and who Andersen indicates were historically associated with Wénchāng.[9] Though oftentimes other pairs of deities, such as the Earl of Wind 風伯 and the Rain Master 雨師, or Sire Thunder and the Thunder Mother 雷母 are also enshrined in these outer positions, it is the Prime Marshals which predominate here, and are the least subject to variation. Furthermore, these other deities such as the Earl of Wind are not included in the portion of the Invitation of the Spirits text which corresponds with this section of the altar-space, where only Prime Marshals, Spirit Officers, and other exorcistic functionaries of Ritual Method Daoism are invoked together in a clearly demarcated sequence.

4. Ritual Method Ancestral Masters

Farther out, and typically stationed near the two side entrances to the Jiào altar are installations for Celestial Master Zhāng 張天師 and Zhēnwǔ 真武. While Andersen describes these two as "Masters" and "Saints" respectively,[10] they are best understood, I believe, as a pair comprising a single category, as their spatial symmetry implies. As such, I argue this pair should also be seen in their specific context as Ancestral Masters 祖師 (if not the Ancestral Master 祖師 and Root Master 本師) of Ritual Method Daoism. These two deities are the most common subjects of the Daoist Ritual Officer's technique of liturgical transformation, and both are, from the Sòng onward, the archetypal exorcists and alter-egos of the Daoist Ritual Officer, who commands the Prime Marshals, Spirit Officers, and spirit-soldiers of Ritual Method pantheons in order to control the spirits of the dead

[9] High Priest Zhōng relates that Golden Armor is regarded as an avatar of General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart 素車白馬大將軍, the ancient exorcistic figure connected with spirits of the dead.
[10] Andersen 2009:20.

and environmental entities that both cause illness, and are enshrined in the local temples of society.

5. Local Deities at the Altar of the Three Realms 三界壇

Between these two Ancestral Masters and just inside the closed central doors of the temple are where, ideally,[11] the gods of the host temple, its allied temples, and other altars have been placed for the duration of the Jiào, opposite to the Three Pure Ones at the other extreme of the altar-space. As Andersen points out, there is no mention of this Altar of the Three Realms in any canonical Daoist source. Yet this particular altar directly represents the incorporation of local, Popular gods into the Daoist liturgical system.[12] Here, the gods are seated in the same manner as the human participants, which is to say as worshippers in the Jiào altar, turned toward the high Daoist gods. In their participation in the Jiào, which all regard as the capstone of religious life, both people and gods can be meaningfully said to be *Daoist*, in which both people and gods assent to the premises of the rite, while expressing parallel modes of embodied practice that clearly communicate how cultic life is oriented toward a Daoist ritual cosmos, in which the highest powers of the universe are depicted and accepted as Daoist. In the ritual lives of temples, the viability of the temple-cult and the legitimate authority of its deities are all explicitly understood to flow from the symbols and rites of this Daoist ritual cosmos. In Mínnán-speaking regions at a minimum, but likely across much of traditional southern China, there is simply no parallel Buddhist,

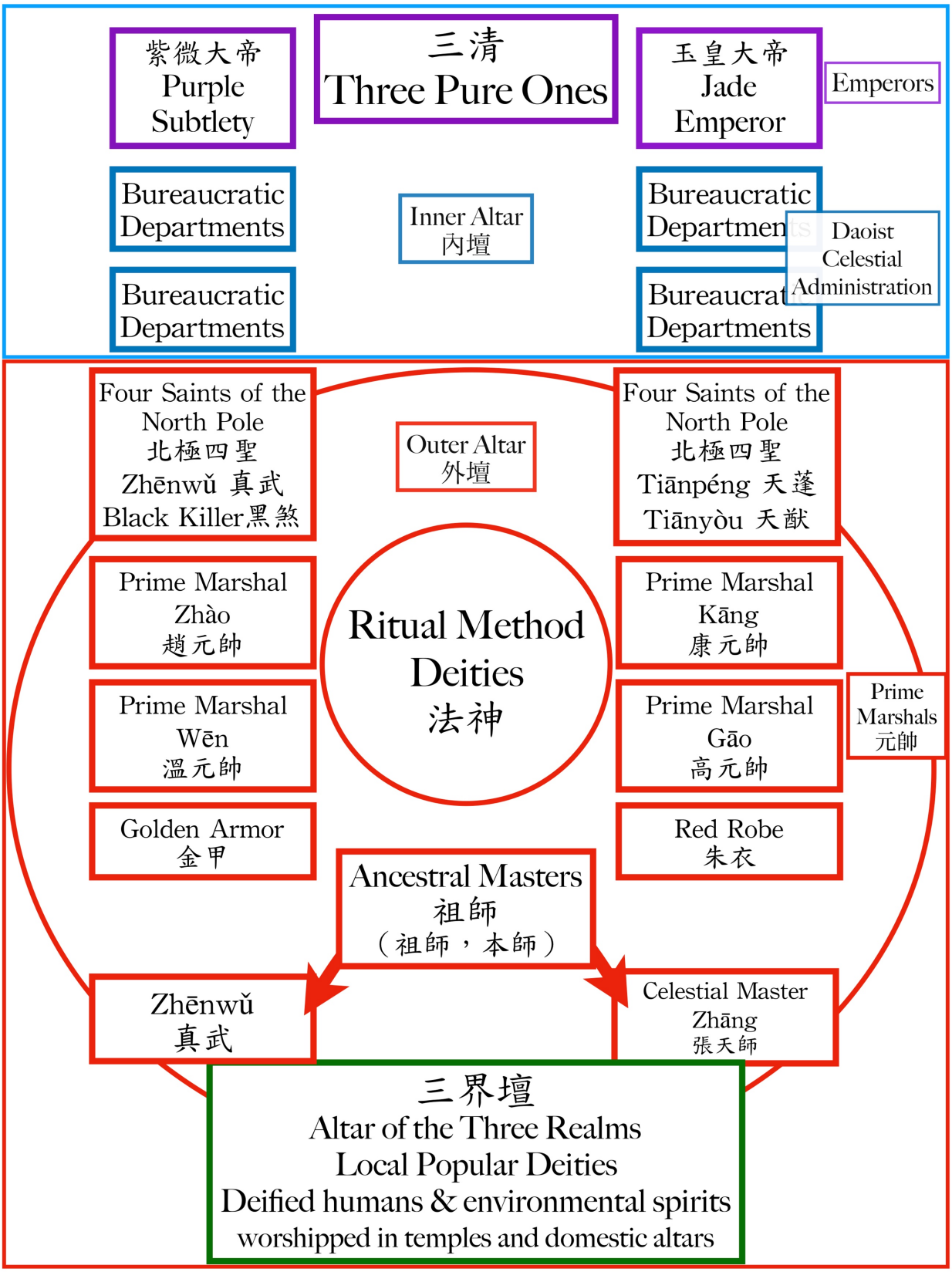
[11] Given factors of space, and what are sometimes very large numbers of spirit-images brought in to Observe the Jiào, there are often what amount to bleachers set up for these gods on the sides or even a rear hall if no other space is available. However, whenever space permits, there is a strong preference for placing the local gods in this position at outer perimeter of the altar, along the central axis. In many cases, though, only the gods of precinct-alliance temples are placed on the Altar of the Three Realms, along the central axis, while the other, unaffiliated spirit-images, sent by individuals or altar-groups who pay a (usually) modest fee to have their gods Observe the Jiào, are placed on the sideline bleachers.

[12] It is surely no coincidence that this altar, named for the Lord(s) of the Three Realms 三界公, i.e. the Three Officers 三官, is placed in the same location relative to the temple or home door as the Lord(s) of the Three Realms Incense-burner 三界公爐, which one can still find in many home and temples suspended from the ceiling and hung along the central axis. In the regional culture, the symbolism of this placement and the Lord of the Three Realms has come to indicate the linkage between domestic and temple cults and the higher echelons of the Daoist celestial administration, a role likewise fulfilled by the Lord of Heaven Incense-burner, which is similarly placed along the temple's central axis, either outside or symbolically facing outside near the temple door.

Sectarian, or Confucian practice which so comprehensively redirects the gods, altars, and devotees of the Common Religion to their symbolic and ritual orders, as former Buddhist versions of such an arrangement have not survived in any significant way in southern China.[13]

[13] See Daniel Stevenson, "Buddhist Ritual in the Song," where he discusses Buddhist rituals for local gods, which involved their ritual purification and Taking Refuge 皈依 in Buddhism. The rites Stevenson describes also involved bureaucratic messengers, revealing Daoist influence. Important questions regarding such Buddhist ritual for local deities remain. For example, was such ritual an influence on the development of Daoist rites incorporating local deities? Such Buddhist ritual appears not to have taken as extensive root in society as Daoist and hybrid Daoist-Ritual Master ceremony. As mentioned above, the Buddhistic Jiào rites studied by Tam Wai-lun display significant Red-Headed Ritual Method content, as well as Daoist structural elements, and hence cannot be simplistically regarded as a "Buddhist" alternative to Daoist community ritual. The fact that Daoism and Ritual Method traditions most actively incorporated local gods and similar deities into their ranks as Prime Marshals and the like, as well as exorcistic performance techniques which enabled priestly engagement with Spirit-mediums are surely major reasons why these traditions became better equipped to specialize in ceremony involving mediumistic cults. The role of Tantric traditions as practiced by monastic Buddhists in this history is also insufficiently clear, as most Tantric traditions we can see in history and fieldwork have evolved into Tantric-Popular forms of Ritual Method, with few clear parallels in monastic Buddhism beyond rites like the Yújiā Yànkǒu 瑜珈焰口, which of course does not involve Spirit-mediums.

Figure 2.1 Schematic Diagram of the Jiào Altar showing my interpretation of its groupings:



When we examine the Invitation of the Spirits liturgy,[14] with the exception of the Ancestral Masters, who are placed relatively higher in the sequence, the same general structure of the Jiào altar is reproduced in text and performance. The Invitation of the Spirits unfolds in clear, punctuated sequences that conform with the same divisions outlined above in the physical, iconic altar of images, but in much greater detail and scope, with roughly one-hundred and seventy deities (some in collective groups) listed before the local, terrestrial deities at the bottom of the hierarchy. In fact, many of these are also physically represented in the Jiào altar by paper Spirit-tablets 神位. When viewed in their overall sequences, we see that the invocation begins with the Three Pure Ones and other divine emperors of the inner altar, and then proceeds to a host of Celestial Venerables and Stellar Lords before descending to bureaucratic departments，a section headed by the Three Officials and followed by representatives of the same Four Departments (or Prefectures) 四府 depicted in many Jiào altars.

Then, after the last denizens of the Water Prefecture are summoned, one final line in this segment invokes the historic lineage of Qīngwéi and Língbǎo Daoist priests, who transmitted the traditions "from ancient times to today." Then there is another section-break in the summons, after which the next sequence begins with the "Two Prime Marshals Yĭn and Wú of the Shàngqīng Department of the Celestial Pivot" 上清天樞院尹吳二元帥, and the "Two Prime Marshals Zhào and Liú of the North Pole Department of Exorcism" 北極驅邪院趙劉二元帥. Thus starting with these two pairs, the Invitation of the Spirits commences invocation of the Prime Marshals, Spirit Officers and other generals, emissaries, and subordinates of Ritual Method Daoism, who are

[14] Ōfuchi, 《中國人の宗教儀禮》, 256-263. This rite, whose formal name is the "Pronouncement of Summons" 啟白 (k'ei beiĥ), is more colloquially referred to as the Invitation of the Spirits 請神 (qĭng shén/ ĉhiāh sheeń).

clearly grouped together in a distinct segment of the liturgy. Here we find virtually all of the important deities found in the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*, often in their familiar groupings, as well as such figures as the Grand General Nine Phoenix Destroyer of Filth 九鳳破穢大將軍 and the Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms, symbols which are consistently deployed on the leading edge of ritual in both Daoist and Minor Rite ceremony. In other words, the subaltern martial subordinates deployed to the front line of ritual time, and who make contact with impurity so as to remove it, these potent and indispensable symbols tasked with the dirty work at the business-end of ritual power are assigned a low position in the status hierarchy, even when they are invoked first in the actual opening of ritual time.

Furthermore, by concentrating all of these Prime Marshals and other Ritual Method symbols into one clearly defined stratum of the pantheon –where there are none of other figures like the Rain Master or Earl of Wind whose images sometimes appear in the corresponding section of the Jiào altar, Daoist liturgists clearly saw these symbols as forming a distinct and coherent domain, and placed them near the bottom of the Daoist hierarchy, just above the deified human beings and environmental spirits of the Common Religion at the very bottom. The proximity of these two groups is very important, as Ritual Method symbolism and performance equipped Daoists with the means to subdue these unruly and potentially unclean local gods, engage and overawe their Spirit-mediums, and bring them and their cults into the Daoist liturgical order.

In theory, these Prime Marshals and Spirit Officers are drawn from this same domain of blood-drinking local spirits enshrined in local temples, and have been elevated into a position of authority within the Daoist military bureaucracy, from which they now apply exorcistic control

over the spirits of local cults and the environment on behalf of the Daoist Ritual Officer and the symbolic order he represents. It is not merely that both local spirits and Prime Marshals are relatively low-ranking when compared to the cosmic emperors and astral deities of the Daoist firmament, but that there is a historical and ritual relationship between these Ritual Method Prime Marshals, Spirit Officers, and other symbols on the one hand, and the deified human beings – formerly denounced as demonic, and pointedly excluded from Daoist pantheons, on the other. As such, the arrangement visible in the Jiào altar is a microcosm of the larger cultural synthesis, and embodies the historic relationships of opposition and accommodation among Daoist traditions and mediumistic cults.

In the proportions dedicated to these Prime Marshals and related subordinates in both the Jiào altar and the Invitation of the Spirits liturgy, the Táinán-area Língbǎo tradition is without close parallel in canonical Daoist sources, but where broadly similar altar-pantheons are presented, in their basic outlines we find the same sequential relationships among high emperors, stellar deities, bureaucratic departments, Prime Marshals, and finally, state-sanctioned local deities and household gods at the bottom of the hierarchy.[15] Hence this structural arrangement among different historical and cultural strata represents a common strategy adopted by Daoists for ordering their construction of an inclusive cultural synthesis.

The integration of these different strata of ritual did not simply neutralize the tensions between these different modes of divinity and ritual, with their different orientations and models of power. Instead, the latent tensions among them have become encoded within the spatial

[15] The clearest example of this tendency is given in the global pantheon presented in j.51-56 of the *Wúshàng Huánglù Dàzhāi Lìchéng Yí* 無上黃籙大齋立成儀, ZHDZ 43:606-662.

relationships that depict their positions within this synthesis. As such the deified dead of local cults and the deathless divinities of the Dào are still opposed in both their natures and in their relative spatial positions, while symbols of the exorcistic Ritual Method, which represent the subordination of local and demonic spirits to a ritual expert, and the use of spiritual violence to achieve ritual aims, are clearly positioned far below the symbols of the politically centralizing literary administration. As an intermediary zone between the Daoist bureaucracy and the domain of mediumistic local deities, these Prime Marshals and other military figures constitute an insulating buffer-zone between the pure, exalted spirits of the Dào, and (from a Daoist perspective) the intrinsically impure, blood-eating deified humans of local society. Thus the historic and cultural tensions between Daoist, Popular, and Ritual Method forms of ritual are clearly encoded in the spatial and performative relationships of the religious system itself. The historic integration visible in the Jiào altar and its analogues found in other liturgical and cultic relationships (to which we will turn) in no way mask or efface the differences and historical conflicts among these cultural positions; quite the contrary, these patterns of opposition and ambivalent accommodation structure the relative positions among these cultural strata as expressed in spatial relationships and liturgical sequences.

In the greater Taiwanese region and Mínnán regions, the institutions of the Common Religion have been directly influenced by Ritual Master ceremony of the Tantric-Popular domain, and in a different way by Daoist traditions. While key symbols and ceremonies of the Ritual Master tradition have become integral to the structure of the temple-cult itself, the influence of Daoism is less visible in the temple-cult per se, but is revealed in how community temples are oriented toward symbols of the Daoist altar, including ways inscribed in the most basic acts of temple worship.

The Jiào Altar Writ Large: Ordinary Worship and the Community of Temples

In his review of Kenneth Dean's 1993 work, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China*, Poul Andersen finds that while Dean seeks to demonstrate how Daoist ritual provides an organizing framework for local cults, in fact "there is very little direct argument or hard evidence to substantiate the claim that Taoism serves as an 'underlying framework' structuring religious observances in local communities, *beyond* the occasions when a *jiao* is performed."[16] To see how Daoist symbols have shaped community religious life beyond the Jiào itself, we must look not primarily to the origins of cults and the narrative identities of certain deities, but to how temple worship and the community of temples are oriented toward specific, authoritative symbols of the Daoist Jiào altar.

First, it is important to reiterate that when speaking of the "local cults" comprising what I label the Common Religion, such cults, in their late imperial and modern forms, are not autonomous, idiosyncratic, segmented groups. Rather, these religious institutions share a general cultic form in terms of their symbolic structure, content, and practice, while moreover the altars of the Common Religion are networked through multiple and overlapping alliances, the most important of which are highly formal, and of which the better-known genealogical relationships of "division of incense" 分香 constitute but one vertical dimension. A series of other, lateral, territorial, and confraternal alliances exist between temples and altar groups, and these alliances play a central role in the organization, funding, and staging of many ritual events, none more so than the Jiào.

[16] Poul Andersen, "Cults and Liturgical Frameworks: Religious Revival in Southern Fujian," *Acta Orientalia*, (1995):197, emphasis in original.

Beyond these mostly formal precinct alliance networks, the structurally-analogous temples and altars of the Common Religion are further linked through ritual processions of many different kinds, and which always involve far more temples than those in specific alliance circles. Many aficionados of temple culture move among different groups and events as both spectators and participants. In these patterns of cooperation, cultically-dissimilar religious traditions, such as Sectarian groups, monastic Buddhist temples, and temples primarily dedicated to spirit-writing are not included in these networks and their rounds of activity. The networked altars of the Common Religion, in both their cultic structures, religious premises, and social linkages constitute a coherent domain with far more clearly defined parameters than most scholars have acknowledged.

One important expression of this common cultic structure is the nature of temple worship and its protocols. When ordinary people go to worship in a temple of the Common Religion, regardless of their purposes and regardless of the temple, the sequences of burning and offering incense are the same, and inside the temple, follow a more or less universal order. In all temples, after lighting a bundle of incense (usually pre-sorted with the right number of incense-sticks for the temple's incense burners), int he first act of worship worshippers first step outside the temple, or face outward within the temple, and worship the Lord of Heaven 天公.

The Lord of Heaven has his dedicated incense burner 天公爐 stationed just outside the central temple door, on the temple's central axis, or sometimes within the door but symbolically facing out away from the temple's own altar inside. Often there are padded kneeling hassocks placed before the Lord of Heaven Incense Burner, positioned so that worshippers may kneel, facing outward, with the temple gods behind them. Prevailing custom is to offer three incense

sticks for the Lord of Heaven, and after these have been planted in the incense-burner, worshippers turn to enter the temple and continue their round of bài bài 拜拜 worship.

The Lord of Heaven Incense Burner represents the connection of each temple's incense hearth with the central, heavenly authority of the Jade Emperor's own incense fire. In the symbols and practices of temple religion, the legitimate authority of the temple's gods and cult are universally acknowledged as flowing from the Jade Emperor, and this central supremacy of the Jade Emperor over the temples, altars, and deities of the Common Religion is enacted and acknowledged in every act of temple worship.

Now the Lord of Heaven not only has his own incense burner installed in every temple, he also has his own special Lord of Heaven Temple 天公廟, of which Táinán has two.[17] Though both share the main symbolic elements I wish to raise here, as the plan of the Altar of Heaven is clearer in this regard, I will use it to illustrate these points. When worshippers face the Lord of Heaven Incense Burner and offer incense, they are symbolically facing the Lord of Heaven Temple. This symbolic relationship is formalized in the fact that when worshipping in the Lord of Heaven Temple, worship no longer begins by facing outward, but by facing in. Only in the Lord of Heaven Temple is this the case, as in all other temples the direction of that first act of worship is the same, facing the Lord of Heaven, aka the Jade Emperor.

Within the Lord of Heaven Temple, we first see the Jade Emperor himself in the main hall. In many such temples, as with the Altar of Heaven, he is represented by a spirit-tablet rather than an image, and in the case of the Altar of Heaven, he is further represented by a sacred flame from an oil lamp, also on the central axis before his spirit-tablet (the Yùhuáng Gōng has an

[17] The Altar of Heaven 天壇 Tiān Tán, and the Yùhuáng Gōng 開基玉皇宮.

anthropomorphic spirit-image of the Jade Emperor). In any temple, while the main god sits in the main hall 正殿, if there is a rear hall 後殿 then the primary deities enshrined in the central niche there are of a higher rank than the temple's main god in the front hall. Thus moving to the rear hall of the Altar of Heaven, we find the highest gods of the Daoist Jiào altar, the Three Pure Ones 三清 enshrined in the central niche, together with The Three Officials 三官大帝 and the Tantric-styled Dipper-Mother 斗母, flanked by Stellar Lords of the North and South Poles. Except for the Dipper Mother, all of these deities are depicted in the robes and distinctive headgear of Daoist priests. Along the right-hand side of this rear hall we find the Celestial Worthy of Universal Transformation 普化天尊, as well as two images of Celestial Master Zhāng 張天師 which are (and have, since the late Qīng been)[18] taken out to preside over Jiào performed in temples in the City. On the left-hand side, opposite the Celestial Worthy of Universal Transformation is his counterpart, the Celestial Worthy Who Rescues from Suffering 救苦天尊[19], as well as images for the Celestial Physician 天醫真人 and the Stove-god 灶君.

[18] As documented in the *Miscellaneous Records of Ānpíng County* 安平縣雜記; the relevant passages are presented in the chapter on the Literature of the Wū.

[19] In both the Altar of Heaven and the Yùhuáng Gōng, this deity is labeled Tàiyī Zhēnrén 太乙真人, which is an epithet for the deity whose full title is 太乙救苦天尊. Though there is another Daoist deity named Tàiyī Zhēnrén, I believe the pairing with Pǔhuà Tiānzūn indicates that the deity in question is meant to be the Celestial Worthy Who Saves from Suffering.

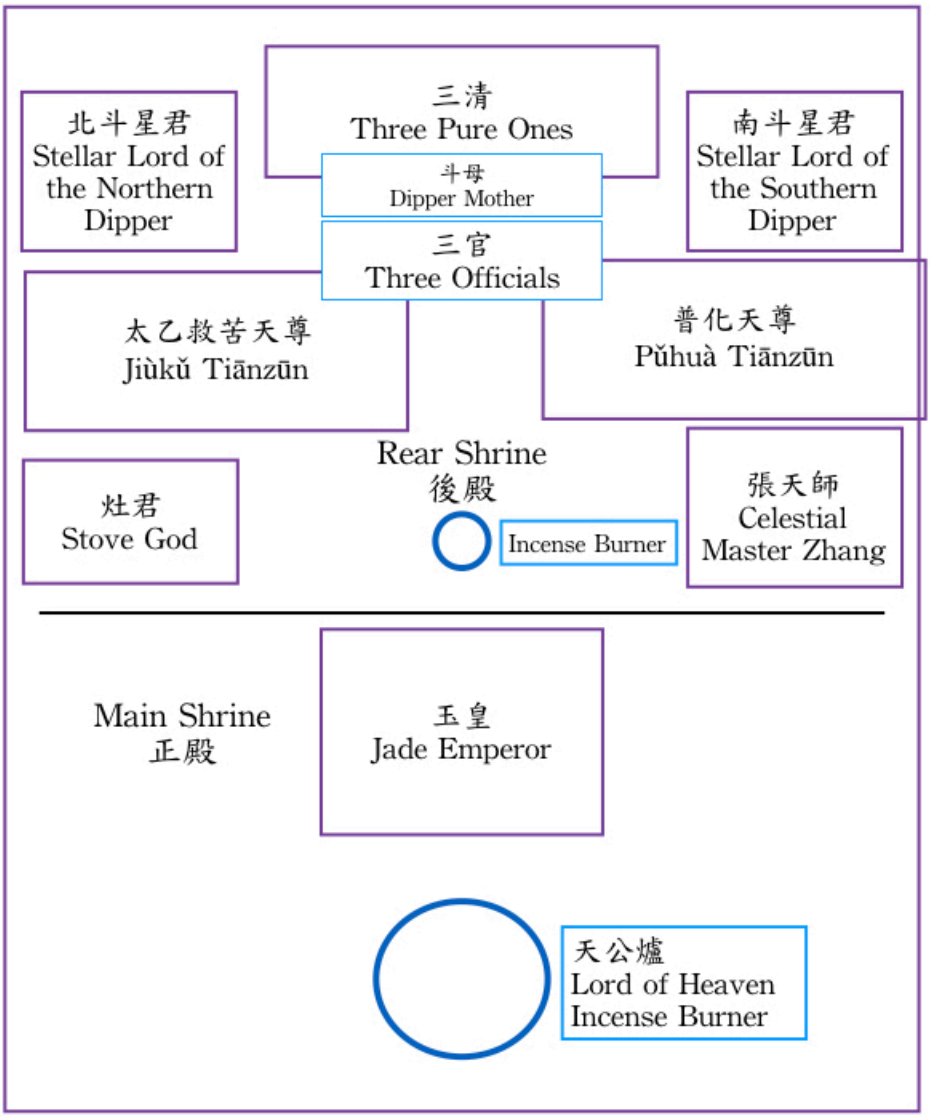


Figure 2.2
The Altar of Heaven, Lord of Heaven Temple
天壇
天公廟
(some rear hall deities
Not shown:
Celestial Physician
天醫真人
Two images of
General Black Tiger
Under the Northern and
Southern Dipper Lords

Though not an exact replica, in its basic structure, the Altar of Heaven and other Lord of Heaven Temples are directly based on the Daoist Jiào altar. This connection is further enacted by the custom of formally summoning an image of Celestial Master Zhāng from either of the Lord of Heaven Temples to preside over each Jiào performance in the city.[20] In other words, the temples of the community are all symbolically oriented toward the Jade Emperor's temple, linked by the Lord of Heaven Incense Burner, and by a series of other important ritual customs which base the

[20] In rural areas this a paper image of the Celestial Master is animated. This is also discussed in the passage from the *Miscellaneous Records of Ānpíng County* 安平縣雜記.

legitimacy of the temple-cult on the authority of the Jade Emperor as manifest in his temple. In their premises and practices, these linkages are symbolically and ritually modeled on the Daoist Jiào and its configuration of religious symbols.

For example, when an all-new temple is to be created, it is customary to conduct a ceremony at the Lord of Heaven Temple called "Obtaining a Jade Order" 領玉旨, in which by a relatively simple if important procedure, authorization for the new temple is obtained through reading a document, offering incense, and casting the divining blocks. Likewise, one method of obtaining Spirit-soldiers for a temple is to perform a somewhat similar ceremony at the Lord of Heaven Temple called "Obtaining Soldiers" 領兵, which also involves a Ritual Master who performs the Summoning of the Camps 調營 rite to formally effect this ritual transfer of spirit-soldiers to the temple involved. Additionally, a great many spirit-images are animated at both of Táinán's Lord of Heaven Temples, as people regard these institutional symbols of authority and legitimacy as particularly suitable places for their gods to be given spiritual life. Again, there is no parallel set of practices between temple cults and institutions of monastic Buddhism. Even spirit-images of Guānyīn or deified Buddhist monks like Qīngshuǐ Zǔshī are still animated by Ritual Masters and Daoist priests in Popular temples, and not in Buddhist monasteries, which have essentially no engagement with the Common Religion. The Common Religion of Mínnán and other regions is so overwhelmingly oriented toward Daoist symbols, that even if local cults are not manifestations of Dao*ism*, they can be meaningfully said to be Dao*ist.*

Another implication of these relationships is expressed in that basic, initial act of temple worship. When people burn incense and face the Lord of Heaven Incense Burner, turning their backs to the gods inside temple, they recreate the bodily positions and symbolic orientation of

worshippers in a Jiào, where the gods of the temple have been removed from their normal place and together with other community gods temporarily enshrined at the Altar of the Three Realms, while the high Daoist gods are placed in front at the inner altar. These bodily practices and their explicit symbolic contexts serve to directly communicate and reinforce the fundamental premises of what Schipper and Dean called a Daoist ritual framework: the Daoist deities are higher than and preside over the deified human beings of the Common Religion, whose legitimate authority likewise derives from these same Daoist symbols, symbols which are not a distant abstraction but are experienced through ongoing cycles of ritual life, in which periodic visits to the Lord of Heaven Temple for a variety of purposes serve to further reinforce the specifically Daoist nature of these centralizing symbols of religious authority.

In modern Táiwān there is a type of modular, multi-story shrine found in many larger temples called the Língxiāo Bǎodiàn 凌霄寶殿 ("Treasure Palace of the Dawn-Empyrean"). This is kind of an add-on, architectural package that stands like a symbolic mountain behind the seat of the main god, with these same high Daoist gods enshrined in higher floors. Sometimes there is a whole floor for Buddhas and Buddhist deities, some complete with wood-paneling and altar-tables more common to monastic Buddhist shrines, but in every instance the Three Pure Ones, Three Officials, the Jade Emperor, Pǔhùa Tiānzun and other high sidereal gods of the Daoist altar are always on the top floor.[21]

Thus it is not so much in the temple-cult and its precinct where we find the imprint of

[21] Língxiāo Bǎodiàn 凌霄寶殿 are found in such temples as (in Táiběi) the Dàlóngdòng Bǎo Ān Gōng 大龍洞保安宮, the Wànhuá Qīngshān Gōng 青山宮); in Táinán, both Lùěrmén 鹿耳門 Māzǔ 媽祖 temples: the so-called 媽祖宮 and the temple in Tǔchéng 土城 that calls itself 鹿耳門正統聖母廟, as well as the well-proportioned but over-gilt rendition at the Nán Kūnshēn Dài Tiān Fǔ 南鯤鯓代天府.

Daoism, nor necessarily in the origins of many gods worshipped in temples, but rather in these dimensions of symbolic orientation, and the ritual cycles that invoke and affirm them. While the temple-cults of the Common Religion are symbolically linked by ritual acknowledgements of a Daoist Heaven presiding over them, temples and altar-groups are also concretely linked by their common and adaptable cultic structure, and by multiple and overlapping precinct alliance networks, as well as ongoing cycles of procession and pilgrimage, all of which foster a clear sense that the temples and altars of the Common Religion constitute a coherent and commensurate culture which in practice is not open-ended, but limited to altars which share their fundamental cultic grammar, vocabulary, and orientation.

The 36 Official Generals Pantheon

As a symbolic set or meta-pantheon, the regional Mínnán rendition of the 36 Official Generals 三十六官將[22]epitomizes the synthesis among Daoist, Ritual Method elements and the temple-cult. Though the concept of such a pantheon is often linked with Xuántiān Shàngdì,[23] it in fact originates with traditions of Tiānpéng, and became elaborated into a pantheon in proto-Ritual Method texts of the Northern Emperor 北帝, and the fully Ritual Method texts of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ. Hence, the concept of such a pantheon is in itself a major element of the historic Ritual Method synthesis which has endured and evolved since

[22] I have translated this phrase 官將 as "Official Generals" rather than "Officials and Generals" because there are no civil officials in this pantheon. Rather, the term "official" 官 here functions in the same way as the phrase 官兵 "official troops" that appears in many historical documents, particularly where such official troops are battling rebels or bandits.

[23] This association is most fully articulated in the Míng-era hagiography *Record of the Journey to the North* 北遊記, also known as the *Complete Biography of the Birth and Life of Ancestral Master Xuántiān Shàngdì, True Warrior of the North* 北方真武祖師玄天上帝出身全傳.

its inception in the late Táng and Five Dynasties. As versions of such a pantheon proliferated from the Sòng and Yuán onward, in the late imperial period Mínnán region, a particular cluster of symbols coalesced within this framework whereby a series of Ritual Method subordinate pantheons of both Daoist and Tantric-Popular contexts became assembled into a comprehensive meta-pantheon in which we see the hierarchical integration among the Daoist and Ritual Master symbols most often associated with ritual performance brought together, and collectively enshrined, invoked, and depicted within the temple-cult.

As a unit, these 36 Official Generals are widely represented by an assembly of "heads" in the same manner as the Five Camps Heads 五營頭, with distinctive metal (or more rarely, wooden)[24] heads attached to a spike about six inches long, usually with a strip of red cloth or ribbon as a kind of robe, and placed together in a wooden rack. Like the Five Camps Heads, these spiked heads are still sometimes used to pierce the cheeks or subcutaneous flesh of Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters, a performance technique believed to intensify the spiritual power brought to bear in a given ceremony. In some cases, individual heads are dispatched to people's homes to effect healing or exorcism, a practice possibly related to the noticeable depletion of certain collections of these heads; the Ānpíng Miàoshòu Gōng, for example, only has 17 heads in its assembly, a number which the Ritual Master explained as a "representation" of the 36.[25] While in Táinán City proper, assemblies of these heads of the 36 Official Generals are far less universal than the ubiquitous Five

[24] By contrast, the Five Camps Heads, or at least the heads themselves are most often wooden.
[25] By contrast, the Ānpíng Kāitái Tiānhòu Gōng 開臺天后宮, whose rituals are performed by the Miào Shòugōng Minor Rite troupe, has an assembly with all 36 heads.

Camps Heads, in Ānpíng, Pénghú, and Jīnmén, most temples have both assemblies of such "heads" enshrined on their altar (usually in addition to a separate set of Five Camps Heads), and during rites of Rewarding the Troops, these are brought out to the altar set up outside for this purpose.[26]

Moreover, the 36 Official Generals form a common motif as Door Gods, where they are always depicted in four panels, on the dragon and tiger side doors (and not the central doors). Most often, such Door Gods are associated with temples to Bǎoshēng Dàdì, but temples to many other deities, from Xuántiān Shàngdì to various Wángye temples likewise have such Door Gods. Temple murals depicting this pantheon are also common, painted in the same iconographic conventions as the Door Gods. Like all such painted images of deities in and on temples, as both Door Gods and the subject of murals, these 36 spirits are animated by the rite of Opening the Light 開光, most often by individual gestures of dotting their foreheads with a consecrated brush, and illuminating them with a consecrated mirror. Framed, painted images of the 36 Generals hang along both walls of the Chéngxīn Tán, the home altar of Ritual Master Lín Dòuzhī, in the same manner as in temples where such images appear. The major Táiběi-area Bǎoshēng Dàdì temple, the Dàlóngdòng Bǎo-ān Gōng 大龍洞保安宮 has an entire collection of carved images of the 36 Official Generals enshrined in their main hall, surrounding the great Realized Man Wú 吳真人. Thus as animated images, these heads, Door Gods, and temple murals are not

[26] Usually, however, when temples perform the procession to renew their outer Five Camps on the temple precinct, only the assembly of Five Camps Heads is brought along, together with General Black Flag and the other ritual implements like the whip, Celestial Ruler, and sword, i.e. those ritual implements consecrated in ritual.

mere decorations, nor characters from mythic narrative, but rather living presences invoked in temple and healing ritual.

In addition to their representation in Door Gods and temple murals, there is a Minor Rite invocation for this pantheon, which is largely the same as the Door Gods pantheon, but which differs in certain key aspects which will be taken up below. The invocation for the 36 Official Generals is among the most important, most widely distributed, and most frequently sung invocations in the entire Minor Rite tradition. As such, it comprises one of the core invocations I have identified as generally common to all traditions across the region.[27] De Groot specifically mentions that Minor Rite troupes in Xiàmén invoked this pantheon when participating in exorcistic processions to expel plague. Describing the troupe of youths, he reports that

> It is incumbent on them in the first place to exercise influence upon the thirty six generals of the Celestial Army by chanting. They do this first in the temple before the procession sets out, thereby inducing them to descend; and they repeat their chant over and over again when the procession is perambulating the streets, in order to stimulate the valor and prowess of the generals.[28]

Given the wide distribution and near-unanimity of the 36 Official Generals invocation in Pénghú and Táiwān, I believe we can conclude that the invocation used in late Qīng Xiàmén –the source-region for many Minor Rite traditions in the Táinán-area– was likewise very close to if not essentially identical with the versions circulating across the Táiwān straight. Likewise, Xiàmén and Tóng-ān area temple-murals of the 36 Official Generals, primarily in temples dedicated to Bǎoshēng Dàdì, likewise demonstrate

[27] For a discussion of these issues see the chapter on the Minor Rite invocation genre.
[28] De Groot, *Religious System of the Chinese*, 6:985.

symbolic continuity with the same tradition in Táiwān.[29] Hence this particular composite pantheon is not merely a contingent assembly of local spirits, but a region-wide phenomenon which emphasizes the most important subordinate spirits used in ritual, and organizes them in a structured array that reflects the hierarchical relationships among Daoist and Ritual Master symbols. As primarily a manifestation of Tantric-Popular Ritual Method, the 36 Official Generals also represent one of the main elements of the Ritual Master tradition to become widely incorporated into the structure of the temple-cult itself, though less completely ubiquitous than the Five Camps and Prime Marshal of the Central Altar, these core constituents of Ritual Master ceremony are themselves members of the 36 Official Generals as well. Interestingly, a Japanese-era ethnographer of Táiwān, Suzuki Seiichirou reports that in the early 20th C., Spirit-mediums would sometimes diagnose illness as arising from someone offending 冒犯 one or more of these 36 Official Generals, and in response the offended spirit had seized one of the person's souls, which had to be ransomed through a ritual performance.[30]

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[29] For example, the Xiàmén Dàitáou Cíjì Gōng 廈門埭頭慈濟宮 features wall-murals of the 36 Official Generals, though rendered in a different style than is normally seen in Táiwān.

[30] Suzuki writes:

"When people of this province come down with an illness, in the past most did not summon a medical doctor 醫生, but rather employed medical treatment from Wū-xí or a Spirit-medium 乩童, as most people themselves believe the reason they will become ill is through offending a malevolent spirit or evil Killer-spirit 凶神惡煞. If the Wū-xí says they have indeed become ill through offending a malevolent spirit, then they will summon a Master-Sire 師公 to perform a rite of "Sacrifice and Sending-off" 祭送. If their illness began when Wáng-ye 王爺was out on patrol, then they will believe they offended Wáng-ye, and if they believe themselves to have committed an offense, they must perform this kind of worship for the forgiveness of their crime, and pray that their disease be healed at once and their crime forgiven. In addition, if someone has offended the Thirty-six Generals, they will believe that one of their cloud-souls 魂 has been seized by the spirit, and so must worship for the forgiveness of their crime and beg that their soul be set free. Also, if someone wishes to mend their ways and begin anew, then they will present offerings before the deity, light candles and incense, and toss the divination-blocks, and also burn spirit-money with great ceremony, in order to indicate they have resolutely decided to change from the perverse and return to upright behavior."

Though largely the same, the Door Gods and Minor Rite invocation versions of this pantheon feature important differences at the top, or beginning of each representation, but amid these revealing differences, each presents differently configured stages with symbols of Daoist Ritual Method placed either at or near the apex of the pantheon. Let us first examine the Door Gods, which, despite some variations toward the bottom ranks are largely standardized in the greater Táinán region.

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本省人生病時，以前多半不請醫生，而是由巫覡或乩童來治療，因為他們多半認為自己所以會生病是由於觸怒了凶神惡煞。假如巫覡說確實是觸怒了兇神，那就要請「師公」（道士）舉行「祭送」。如果是在王爺出巡時生的病，那就認為在行為上冒犯了王爺，或者認為自己有罪時，都要舉行這種謝罪拜拜，以祈求疾病霍然痊癒和免罪。此外，加果冒犯了三十六軍將時，就認為自己的魂會被神奪去，因此也要做謝罪拜拜祈求釋放。此外某人痛改前非時，也會在神前擺上供品，點燭焚香擲筊，並且燒金紙頂禮膜拜，以表示自己的決心改邪歸正。Suzuki Seiichirou 鈴木清一郎著、《台灣舊慣習俗信仰》馮作民譯，(臺北市：眾文, 民67[1978/2000]:5-6.

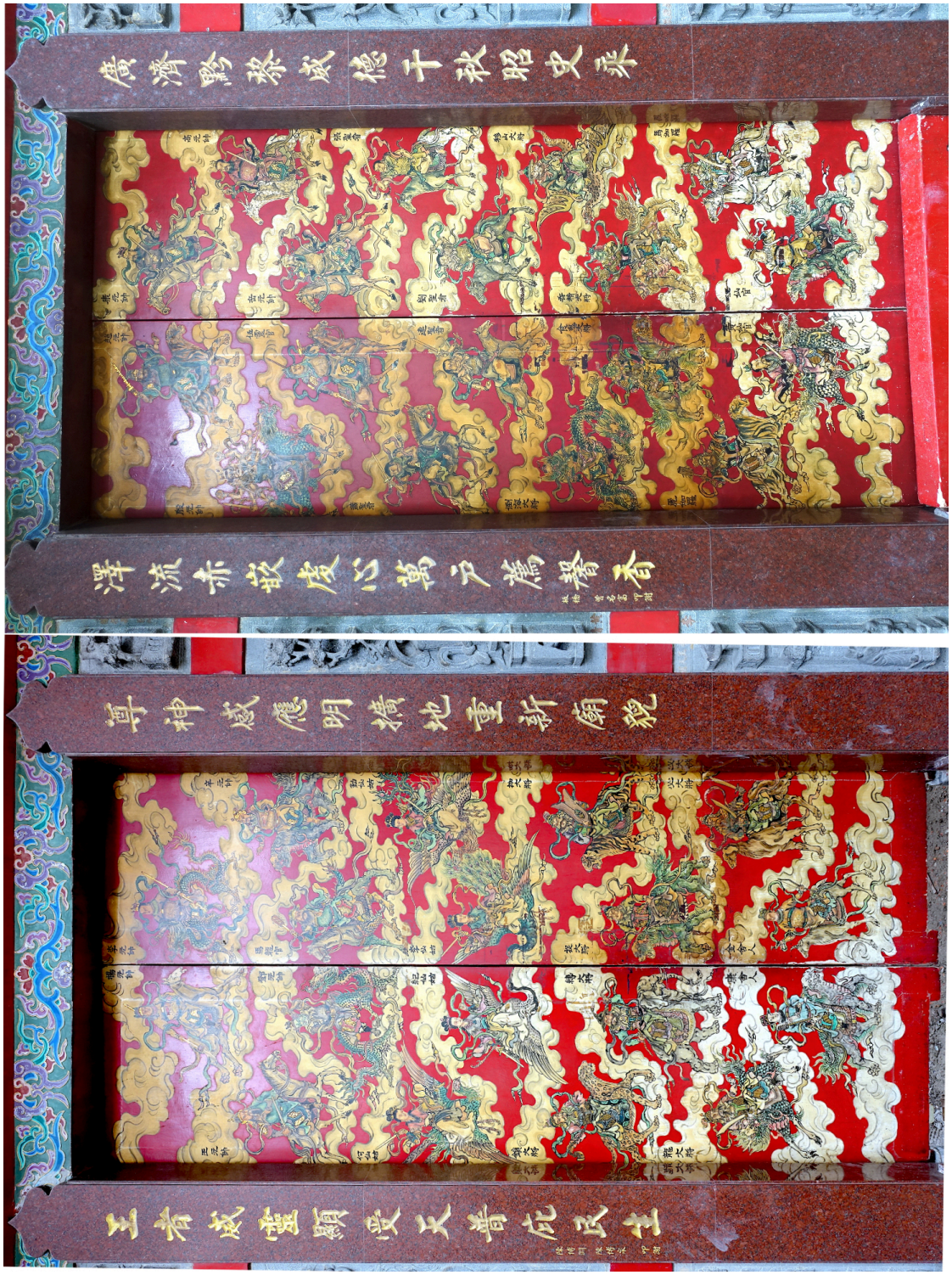

Figure 2.3 The 36 Official Generals Door Gods, from the old, pre-restoration Xīluó Diàn 西羅殿, Táinán, "Dragon" side top, "Tiger" side bottom. Photos by author

Table 2.1 Deities of the 36 Official Generals Door Gods Pantheon

虎邊 (Tiger side= facing in, left-hand side, From top to bottom in pairs, R then L)	龍邊 (Dragon side From Top to Bottom in Pairs (R then L)
李元帥 Prime Marshal Lǐ (Sān Tàizi) 楊元帥 Prime Marshal Yáng 辛元帥 Prime Marshal Xìn 王元帥 Prime Marshal Wáng 馬龍官 Spirit Officer Mǎ (馬靈官) 鄧元帥 Prime Marshal Dèng	康元帥 Prime Marshal Kāng 趙元帥 Prime Marshal Zhào 高元帥 Prime Marshal Gāo 殷元帥 Prime Marshal Yīn 岳元帥 Prime Marshal Yuè 五靈官 The Five Spirit Officers
1	
勤仙姑 Immortal Lady 何仙姑 Immortal Lady 李仙姑 Immortal Lady 紀仙姑 Immortal Lady	張聖者 Saint Zhāng 蕭聖者 Saint Xiāo 劉聖者 Saint Liú 連聖者 Saint Lián
3	2
枷大將 Grand General Cangue 鎖大將 Grand General Lock 捉大將 Grand General Seize 縛大將 Grand General Bind	移山大將 Grand General Mover of Mountains 倒海大將 Grand General who Overturns the Sea 吞精大將 Grand General Who Swallows Spirits 食鬼大將 Grand General Who Eats Ghosts
4	5
必大將 Grand General Bì [畢?] 龍大將 Grand General Lóng 金舍人 Bailiff Jīn 康舍人 Bailiff Kāng (bottom)	馬伽羅 Mǎ Jiāluó 虎伽羅 Hǔ Jiāluó 江仙官 Immortal Official Jiāng 黃仙官 Immortal Official Huáng (bottom)
6	
7	

The deities presented in the Door Gods pantheon are arranged in matching pairs and quartets, several of which form balanced sets across the dragon side and tiger side doors. At the top are a group (#1) of primarily Daoist Prime Marshals, including most of those

represented in the typical Jiào altar (Zhào, Kāng, Gāo),[31] and others who figure prominently in rites of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuan* (Xìn, Wáng, Yīn). But several other notable deities appear here, starting with Prime Marshal Lǐ, who is painted holding a metal hoop, revealing him to be Lǐ Nézhà 李哪吒, aka the Third Prince 三太子, the major Tantric deity at the focus of many Ritual Master altar-systems, and who, for that reason, has come to stand in the center of virtually every temple as Prime Marshal of the Central Altar.

Then in the lower set of this first section we find in a crisscross symmetry two deities, or symbols, Spirit Officer Mǎ 馬靈官, and the Five Spirit Officers 五靈官. These complex "deities" are perhaps best understood as a pair of related symbols or symbol-clusters, as both are representatives of the pentadic spirits known as the Five Powers 五通, and moderately rebranded as the Five Manifestations 五顯, though the title Five Spirit Officers is also sometimes applied to the Five Blessed Grand Emperors 五福大帝 of Fúzhōu.[32] Spirit Officer Mǎ is identified in the Minor Rite invocation as Huáguāng 華光, and this deity or symbol is widely worshipped as Grand Emperor Huáguāng as either the chief member, or a collective representation of both the Five Manifestations and the Five Powers. An invocation in *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* 222, a ritual text centered on Prime Marshal Mǎ, also directly identifies these symbols as "Huáguāng of the Five Powers" 華光五通.[33] Though his Door

[31] Though Prime Marshal Wēn is missing here, he appears in the Minor Rite invocation version discussed below.

[32] For example, the Táinán Five Spirits Hall 五靈堂 is dedicated to the Five Blessed Grand Emperors of Fúzhōu, whose collective and individual titles call them the Five Spirit-Sires 五靈公, with each known as a certain Spirit-sire 靈公. See Academia Sinica Cultural Resources Geographic Information System, 白龍庵五靈堂, http://crgis.rchss.sinica.edu.tw/temples/TainanCity/north/2104050-BLAWLT (ret 8/19).

[33] DFHY 222, ZHDZ 38:245.

Gods image lacks any of his signature iconography (such as his subordinate General White Snake 白蛇大將軍 and the pyramid-shaped "Golden Brick" 金磚), as Spirit Officer Mǎ,[34] his presence in the pantheon is a testimony to his prominence in the historic ritual culture, a fact further emphasized by his pairing with the Five Spirit Officers that he either leads or represents.[35] Given the prominence of temples to the Five Manifestations and Five Powers,[36] the placement of Spirit Officer Mǎ and the Five Spirit Officers in a high echelon of the Door Gods pantheon likely reflects their perceived importance as both agents of ritual, and subjects of cultic veneration.

These complex symbols represent a major area where temple-cults and Ritual Method ceremony intersect, and where symbols of Daoist-brand Ritual Method reveal some of their closest associations with more fully Popular domains of ritual culture. The presence of Spirit Officer Mǎ, the Five Spirit Officers, and Prime Marshal Lǐ also signify a certain "bottom-up" influence here on the upper stratum of this Door Gods pantheon. Though most figures shown in this top-most sector are the most important Daoist Prime Marshals, with no shortage of other such Daoist symbols in the manuals of Daoist priests, the fact that deities and symbols more strongly associated with temple cults and the Tantric-Popular Ritual Master have been elevated to this upper position would suggest

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[34] His title is written with a Mínnán homophone 龍 (linnǵ) for 靈 in his Door Gods representation.

[35] In formula for drawing a talisman (封山破洞符), DFHY 222 also links Spiritual Officer Mǎ with this phrase Five Spiritual Officers (ZHDZ 38:250).

[36] The Táinán temple to the Five Manifestations, the Five Emperors Temple 五帝廟 is among the city's oldest, and is mentioned in the Kāngxī 35 (1696) *Táiwān Prefecture Gazetteer* (j.9:五帝廟在附郭縣寧南坊. ctext.org version). The *Táinán Xiànshì Sīmiào Dàguān* 臺南縣市寺廟大觀 states that the original temple was built during the Míng Zhèng era, though a temple was first built on the current site in 1796, which the Academia Sinica Cultural Resources Geographic Information System entry takes as the date of its founding. See Chén Réndé, 《臺南縣市寺廟大觀》(高雄市：興台文化出版社，民56[1967])，49.

that perceptions of spiritual power and relevance to ritual performance, rather than abstract notions of hierarchy, have shaped this particular pantheon.

In sections 2 and 3 of the Door Gods pantheon we have paired quartets of spirits, one male and one female. On the right are the Four Saints 四聖[37] Zhāng, Xiāo, Liú, and Lián 張蕭劉連, four deified Sòng-era Tantric Ritual Masters, who in varying configurations are often worshipped across Fújiàn, Táiwān and Southeast Asian communities as Lord(s)-of-the-Rite 法主公, and by the Míng had become a set of four subordinate spirits attached to the cult of Chén Jìnggū.[38]In Mínnán regions, these Four Saints have become associated with four quarters of the five-directional Five Camps 五營, with Lǐ Nézhà as Prime Marshal of the Central Altar governing the central camp. In this capacity, these Four Saints are not only the primary subordinates of the Ritual Master, who frequently appear in many ritual settings, they have also become indispensable fixtures of the temple-cult itself, enshrined in Inner Camps 內營 within the temple, and in Outer Camps 外營 stationed both outside the temple door, and in many cases by five separate shrines at the symbolic compass points of the temple precinct boundary. Though many members of the 36 Official Generals pantheon are, apart from this collective group, frequently invoked in ritual, none can compare with the importance and universality of this unit in their roles as the Saints 聖者 of the Five Camps.[39]

On the left (#3), the Four Immortal Ladies Qín, Hé, Lǐ, and Jì 勤何李記 are paired

[37] Not to be confused with the Daoist Ritual Method quartet, the Four Saints of the North Pole 北極四聖, whom we will turn to in a following section.
[38] As testified by the entry for Madame Big Breast 大奶夫人 in the *Sānjiào Dàquán*.
[39] The Five Camps and these Saints are discussed below.

with the Four Saints not only for their numeric symmetry, but because they too form the four compass-quarter positions of a unit known as the Female Five Camps 女五營 (with the Dark Woman of the Nine Heavens 九天玄女 in the central camp), an important counterpart of the male Five Camps. This group of exorcistic goddesses was historically summoned in rites for women facing birth trauma, ritual purposes explicitly emphasized in their individual Minor Rite invocations.[40] As in their invocations, the Door Gods depict these Immortal Ladies as sword-wielding warrior-spirits; like all the members of this pantheon, they are "generals," which is to say exorcistic martial spirits, whose power is used to effect healing, purification, and protection. As such they represent an important alternative to many conventional and scholarly concepts of Chinese female deities (Sangren 1993), as they are both martial, exorcistic spirits and directly associated with motherhood and childbirth. While previous scholars have overlooked this prominent group of goddesses, [41] their enduring importance, even after the near-total disappearance of maternity ritual, is continually affirmed by their invocation in virtually every Táinán-area Minor Rite performance, either by collective reference or their individual invocations.[42] Though they are most often iconographically represented in murals and Door Gods of the 36 Official Generals, as the Female Five Camps, they are occasionally enshrined with

[40] Discussion of the Female Five Camps is taken up in the chapter on the Minor Rite invocation genre.
[41] For example, Baptandier (1994, 2008) nowhere mentions this prominent group of Immortal Ladies, despite researching both Ritual Master traditions and their connections with rites for women and children.
[42] In the Bǎo-ān Gōng/Xújiǎ tradition-group, exemplified in the CXT collection, these goddesses are usually invoked twice, first in the long spoken invocation at the opening of ritual (CXT 3.9, where again they are paralleled by the Four Saints), and again when the invocation for the 36 Official Generals is sung. As altars of the Black-Head tradition-group devote an entire second half of their Invitation of the Spirits to goddesses, the invocations of the Four Immortal Ladies are sung in most ritual performances.

carved spirit-images in some temples,[43] and also installed in Outer Camps 外營 around a temple's precinct.[44] Included in my copy of the Chéngxīn Tán folio are rites for summoning and rewarding spirit-soldiers of the Female Five Camps, a ritual I have only observed once, when spirit-armies for a Guānyīn temple were recruited from their Ancestral Temple in Táinán, and placed under the command of these Female Five Camps.[45] The prominence given these Immortal Ladies clearly reflects their historic importance in ritual, notably in now seldom-performed rites for women, traces of which still appear in certain ritual manuscripts such as the Sacrifice to the Stars 祭星 liturgy of the Táinán-area Língbǎo Daoists, a rite which in the past was performed for women experiencing birth trauma.[46] Thus, as important persona in the ritual world of the temple-cult, these Four Immortal Ladies are also included within this all-star, collective pantheon, together with their better-known male counterparts.

In the next group (#4) we have the Four Grand Generals Seize, Bind, Cangue, and Lock 捉縛枷鎖 (in their normal order), the deified instruments of restraint and punishment that represent one of the most prominent symbolic clusters to originate in the early Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ and thence pass into both widespread importance in Daoist Ritual Method compendia such as the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*, and into the late imperial Minor Rite of the greater Mínnán-Taiwanese region. Fittingly, these personifications of the local

[43] Such as the Tiānhé Gōng 天和宮 in the North District 北區 of Táinán City.
[44] Such as the Pǔjì Dìan 普濟殿.
[45] These subjects are discussed further in the chapter on the Minor Rite invocation genre.
[46] See Ōfuchi, 《中國人の宗教儀禮》, 678. As revealed in the Shànhuà Dàotán manuscript, the Sacrifice to the Stars (祭煞祭星解厄科儀) itself was one of the principle rituals performed for difficult birth 難產, and includes an additional subordinate pantheon of goddesses to be invoked when performed for this purpose.

magistrate's implements of restraint and torture, used for both interrogation and punishment, were introduced and long associated with the ritual technique of Investigating and Summoning 考召, in which pathogenic spiritual entities deemed responsible for a patient's afflictions were compelled to manifest, often through spirit-possession, and then through ritualized compulsion and negotiation, induced to quit their predation of the patient.[47] In virtually all canonical Daoist sources where these symbols appear, the fourth is in fact represented by "Investigate" (or "Interrogate") 考 (kǎo), a term which may perhaps be best understood as encompassing its close cognate "torture"拷 (kǎo), as historically, all such official interrogation was conducted either through or by threat of physical torture, and this premise is clearly operative in these ritual metaphors drawn from official procedure.

These deified implements of restraint first appear in the earliest Tiānxīn text, the *Tàishàng Zhùhuó Jiumín Zōngzhēn Miyào,* as members of a subordinate pantheon of violent, exorcistic generals, together with sacrificial guidelines for their periodic maintenance. Here these four are also given personal names, variants of which will continue to be used in both other Tiānxīn sources and later texts of the Dàofǎ Huìyuán, indicating the symbolic cohesion of these figures extending from their origins here in the early Tiānxīn tradition.[48] Notably, this same pantheon also includes other interesting (and

[47] On rites of Investigating and Summoning see Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, esp. 96-114; and Matsumoto Kōichi, 「宋代考召法的基本構成」, 在於 《經典道教與地方宗教》 *Scriptural Daoism and Local Religions*, 謝世維等編 (臺北市: 政大出版社, 2014), 71-104.

[48] Similar names associated with these four symbols appear in 上清天心正法 j.6 北極驅邪院將帥姓名; 無上玄元三天玉堂大法 j.27, 三官總治搜邪符, 道法會元 80, 欽火律令鄧天君大法, 副將;道法會元 123 太上三五邵陽鐵面火車五雷大法, 五獄神位; 道法會元 225 火犀大仙馬靈官大法, 副將.

interestingly named) deities, from the "Blood-dripping Severer-of-Heads, General Liú Yán 斬頭瀝血將劉炎, to a "Yakṣa General Chén Shǒuzhōng 藥叉將陳守忠, and Spirit Officer of the Five Lads, Mǎ Shèng 靈官五郎馬勝, an avatar of Spirit Officer (or, Prime Marshal) Mǎ, here also associated with an alternate term for the Five Powers 五通, much as the Door Gods pantheon presents its related symbols.[49]

The importance of these Four Generals is clearly indicated by their frequent invocation in canonical texts of Daoist Ritual Method.[50] But by the time these figures have become established members of the Mínnán 36 Official Generals pantheon, these Four Generals have become explicitly identified with the Three Altars 三壇 (Sān Tán/Sam Duāⁿ), as their invocations make explicit, though as we will see, in the configuration presented in the Minor Rite invocation, the entire pantheon and the invocation itself are all

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[49] 太上助國救民總真祕要 j.7, 祭醮法中神將法, ZHDZ 30:363. Prime Marshal Mǎ is frequently identified as Mǎ Shèng in Daoist sources, e.g. DFHY 222-226, 230.

[50] For example, they appear in a Sòng-Yuán era text of the Northern Emperor 北帝 tradition, 北帝伏魔經法建壇儀, toward the bottom of its pantheon, (ZHDZ 30:214), as well as the arguably Tiānxīn-related Tiāpéng rites of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*, DFHY 163 上清天蓬伏魔大法, 五丁都司符; 166 上清天蓬伏魔大法, 召火獄將吏六員; 167 上清天蓬伏魔大法, 立獄變神訣, and 拷鬼訣. They also appear in numerous other DFHY texts, beyond those mentioned in a preceding note, such as DFHY 92, DFHY 124 (also with Mǎ Shèng among other prominent Prime Marshals), DFHY 197 (with different names) ; DFHY 229 and 230, also texts related to Prime Marshal Mǎ, where in 230 these four are assigned to an Outer Altar, with other spirits guarding an Inner Altar 內壇; DFHY 233, a rite featuring Prime Marshal Zhào of the Dark Altar, in a subordinate pantheon which also includes the intriguing pair Swine Head and Elephant Trunk 豬頭象鼻楊耿二神; DFHY 241, a rite of Spirit Officer Wáng 王靈官; and the Fēngdū rites in DFHY 262, where they are assigned to the Inner Altar 內壇. In the *Fǎhaǐ Yìzhū* they appear in chapters 7, 8, and 15. While one Qīngwéi text, 清微元降大法 lists them (with unique names), the Shénxiāo text *Gāoshàng Shénxiāo Yùqīng Zhēnwáng Zìshū* Dàfǎ 高上神霄玉清真王紫書大法 mentions them several times in j.4 and once in j.7. A core text of the Jìngmíng 淨明 tradition, the *Tàishàng Língbǎo Jìngmíng Dòngshén Shàngpǐn Jīng* 太上靈寶淨明洞神上品經 (ZHDZ31:403) mentions them directly in relation to a pantheon of 36 generals of both inner and outer altars, and directly after these four we find many of the same figures found in the original Tiānxīn pantheon (ZHDZ 30:363, also 上清天心正法 j.6, 30:277), such as the Yakṣa general, among others, indicating a direct dependence on this first text to introduce these particular symbols as a group of personified deities.

organized within the symbols of the Three Altars, a subject of central importance taken up in the next section.

Worthy of note is the further fact that these four are often represented in temples with miniature, wooden and metal replicas, usually hung beside or on altars, while such devices are also a fixture of the exorcistic performance troupes known as the Eight (or Ten) Family Generals 八家將, in which the lead figure of the troupe, called Punishment-Implements Sire 刑具爺, carries a bamboo shoulder-pole with two wooden boards hung from its ends on which these implements of restraint and torture are attached. By dramatically shaking and banging the boards on the ground, the man serving in this position uses the sounds made by these implements of punishment to punctuate and direct the troupe's dance-performance at each temple or incense-altar they call upon. Hence these deified instruments of restraint and torture are recognizable elements in the religious culture, both in their physical representation as actual devices, and in ritual texts. As deified textual symbols, they form an element of remarkable continuity from the earliest sources of Daoist Ritual Method through centuries of textual production and into the ritual systems of late imperial Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters. Since the operative paradigm of Ritual Method ceremony fundamentally involves the application of coercive spiritual violence on spirits consistently portrayed as possessing bodily form, these personified implements of physical restraint and corporal punishment captured the essence of this embodied

construction of ritual power, and gained an abiding place in ritual practice and the religious imagination, long after rites of Investigating and Summoning lost their former popularity.[51]

Of the remaining groups in the 36 Official Generals pantheon, the pair Spirit-Swallower and Ghost-Eater (#5) are likewise familiar figures who represent personifications of what were originally ritual commands or descriptions of exorcistic actions that appear (as "Swallow Demons, Eat Ghosts" 吞魔食鬼) in the ancient Tiānpéng Invocation. As with the other descriptive language in the Tiānpéng Invocation, this pair was later personified as a pair of generals in the same text of proto-Ritual Method that first articulated a pantheon based on the thirty-six four-character phrases of the Tiānpéng Invocation, the *Tàishàng Yuánshī Tiānzūn Shuō Beǐdì Fúmó Zhòu Miàojīng* 太上元始天尊說北帝伏魔神咒妙經. This same pantheon was subsequently adopted and further developed in the earliest text of the Tiānxīn tradition, the *Tàishàng Zhùguó Jiùmín Zōngzhēn Mìyào*.[52] Following this precedent, these two generals gained independence from their original context, embedded in a large pantheon, and became somewhat common figures in Sòng-Yuán texts of Daoist Ritual Method, beginning with those of the Tiānxīn tradition,[53] and making their way into rites of the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*[54] and large ritual compendia like the *Língbǎo Língjiào Jìdù Jīnshū*,[55] while being assigned a place in the

[51] In Lóngyán-area Lǘshān altars, there are still rites based on the earlier models of Investigating and Summoning, but they have evolved into a form of "[Ritual] Master Theater" 師戲. See *Guǎngjì Tán* 114-5, and 205-212.

[52] 太上助國救民總真秘要, j.3, 天蓬救治法, ZHDZ 30:330-335.

[53] E.g. 無上玄元三天玉堂大法 j.27, 驅除制伏品, 治邪蠱吞魔食鬼符.

[54] E.g. DFHY 18, 25, 159.

[55] 靈寶領教濟度金書 j.7, 聖真班位品, 五開度祈禳通用, 天蓬官將聖位; 靈寶領教濟度金書 j.205, 科儀立成品　一百九十四北帝齋用, 官將醮儀, 請稱法位; 靈寶領教濟度金書 j.206, 科儀立成品　一百九十五北帝齋用, 早朝行道儀, 請稱法位; and also in similar pantheons in j. 207 and 208.

Ritual Method latitudes of the grand, all-inclusive pantheon of the *Wúshàng Huánglù Dàzhāi Lìchéng Yí*.[56]

In the Táinán-area Minor Rite, this pair Ghost-Eater and Spirit-Swallower, and to a lesser extent their companions here, Mover-of-Mountains and He-Who-Drains-Oceans are relatively minor figures who, nonetheless, like all of the 36 members of this pantheon are given their own, individual invocations,[57] and sometimes included in other composite assemblies.[58] Aside from their presence in Daoist texts, however, these and several other symbols near the bottom of this pantheon seem to have had at most a supporting role in ritual practice. Nevertheless, their evocative names translate into delightful iconographic representation, with each portrayed either preparing to devour their demonic prey, or with them in varying stages of mastication and ingestion. As such, it may be that their iconographic representation as independent spirit-images earned them an enduring place in the religious imagination, surpassing their specific relevance in ritual per se. Whatever the case, Ghost-Eater and Spirit-Swallower bear the unique distinction of having been among the only founding members, as it were, of Tiānpéng's original pantheon of 36 Generals to reappear in this late imperial Mínnán rendition.

Of the remaining groups of spirits at or near the bottom of the pantheon, the most interesting by far are the pair (36) Mǎ (Horse) Jiāluó 馬伽羅 and Hǔ (Tiger) Jiāluó 虎伽羅, two Tantric-derived spirits first mentioned in the 13th C. *Recorded Sayings* of Baǐ

[56] 無上黃籙大齋立成儀 j.53, 神位門, 左三班.
[57] CXT 173 吞精大將軍, CXT 174 食鬼大將軍.
[58] Namely CXT 21 前壇諸大將, the "Front Altar" invoked together with a "Rear Altar" (CXT 23 後壇猛將) in such rites as the Grand Rewarding of Troops 大犒賞.

Yùchán, in his famous depiction of practitioners of the Yoga 瑜珈 school, one of the clearest and earliest depictions of what I have termed Tantric-Popular Ritual Method.[59] As these symbols appear in other contexts in the Táinán Minor Rite, I will defer their discussion to a subsequent section. But their presence in this pantheon precisely reflects the relevance of these complex Tantric-derived symbols in these other ritual contexts, where they are among the prototypical subordinate spirits whose particular names typify the Chinese domestication of Tantric symbols.

Of the remaining figures (#7) at the bottom of this pantheon, most are rather obscure. If their specific titles are exchanged, then a Bailiff Jiāng 江舍人 appears in invocations for Lord-of-the-Rite Zhāng in his capacity as general of the Eastern of the Five Camps, where Baliff Jiāng is depicted as either a "talisman emissary of the Three Altars" 三壇使符江舍人 (使符 sic),[60] or as "Ancestral Master of the Three Altars" 三壇祖師江舍人.[61] Other sources might help identify these symbols, as they likely had some form of independent existence to be deemed important enough to gain inclusion in this pantheon, as surely other noteworthy subordinates, like the many Spirit-Generals 將爺 worshipped in temples, or the Six Dīng and Six Jiǎ spirits 六丁六甲, also commonly enshrined on temple altars, could conceivably have been recruited as well. However, aside from the pair of Tantric-derived deities (#6), the modern ritual relevance of these last several spirits is

[59] 海瓊白真人語錄，j.1, ZHDZ 19:549.
[60] CXT 153 法天張聖者.
[61] HST 1:49 張聖者神咒. Where CXT 153 has 使符, the Shuǐmén Gōng (of the same Bǎo-ān Gōng lineage-group) has 師父, both Mínnán homophones 使符 sái hú, 師父 [傳] sai-hū. In invocations of the Héyì Táng Minor Rite lineage-tradition, one of their Ancestral Masters (七祖仙師) is surnamed Huáng 黃, and a connection between this figure and the Immortal Official Huáng of the 36 Official Generals pantheon is suggestive but uncertain.

proportionately minor. Perhaps these once enjoyed comparatively greater stature in local or regional culture, and some locality may still preserve their traces, but now, apart from their place here at the bottom of this pantheon, they appear to have no independent presence in religious life.

Taken together, the Door Gods pantheon of the 36 Official Generals are drawn from many of the most frequently invoked deities at the center of Ritual Method ceremony. Notably, symbols from the Daoist domain of Ritual Method largely predominate at the top, though Prime Marshal Lǐ, iconographically identifiable as the Third Prince, is elevated to a high position clearly based on his relevance in Ritual Master and temple ceremony. Likewise, the symbols of Spirit Officer Mǎ and the Five Spirit Officers indicate the most intensely Popular dimensions of Daoist Ritual Method as found in the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*. Despite his own flourishing cult of temples, however, he is still identified here as a Daoist Prime Marshal. Clearly, symbols associated with Daoist ritual and Daoist altars have been depicted has higher or more powerful than the deities placed below them. By embracing this region-wide pantheon, temples and their Ritual Masters clearly assented to its premises, and while symbolic top and leading edge of the Minor Rite invocation differs in important ways from the Door Gods pantheon, aside from its Three Altars exorcistic vanguard, symbols of Daoist Ritual Method are again placed atop the pantheon, though the orthographic corruption of their names has obscured their identities. As a visual composition, with each god shown riding their own distinctive mount, the Door Gods pantheon bears no small resemblance to the ranks of papier-mâché Prime Marshals stationed outside temple doors during a Daoist Jiào.

As this pantheon has in turn become an element of the temple cult itself, this arrangement further demonstrates how one cannot sharply distinguish deities and pantheons invoked by ritual experts on the one hand, and those enshrined in Popular temples and worshipped by ordinary people on the other.[62] Many of the symbols and groups represented in this pantheon are separately enshrined in temples as subordinate deities, quite apart from the 36 Official Generals pantheon per se, none more so than the Four Saints of the Five Camps and Prime Marshal Lǐ.

This symbolic integration among main elements of Ritual Masters' altar-systems and the temple-cult is a direct reflection of their performative integration. Throughout the region, Ritual Master ceremony of the more Tantric-Popular variety is deemed necessary to the maintenance and reproduction of the temple cult, temple building, and temple precinct, so that even rites of the Língbǎo Daoist priests for the consecration of new temples and the animation of spirit-images all reflect Red-Headed, Tantric-Popular influences. Moreover, the kinds of healing rituals that historically were performed by Ritual Masters and involved these particular deities do not represent an autonomous ritual domain detached from or independent of temple religion; quite the contrary, the rites which people employ for healing and the attainment of worldly objectives were and are direct expressions of the religious system based in the community of temples and their liturgical calendar.

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[62] For example Dean, in his study of the "Transformations of the *She*," lists numerous clan-supported temples dedicated to such figures as Prime Marshal Kāng 康元帥 and other Daoist Prime Marshals such as Zhū 朱, Chén 陳 and Mǎ 馬, as well as other Spirit Officers 靈官, all worshipped by clan-groups with the same surnames. See Kenneth Dean,"Transformations of the She 社 (Altars of the Soil) in Fujian." *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, vol. 10, (1998):53-6.

An overall ritual order unites and empowers these nested realms of individual, family, and community ritual. Healing and other individual rites of transformation are not only performed in temples and before domestic altars, but involve the same deities worshipped in temples. Such healing rituals occur within the continuum formed by daily and ongoing acts of worship in the altars and temples of community religion. In turn, the more collective aspects of community religion, in which participation serves to enact group membership, while expressing more general notions of piety and thanksgiving, these more general and collective forms of ritual draw much of their relevance and meaning from the experiences and practices involving these more specific and individual-oriented ritual objectives of healing, protection, and fortune-boosting. Such healing and protective rites prominently feature these subordinate pantheons of the Five Camps, Female Five Camps, Prime Marshals, and Sprit Officers that we find in the 36 Official Generals. These Ritual Method deities were organized into this collective pantheon precisely due to their relevance in this ritual complex, and ranked hierarchically in direct proportion to their perceived power and rank, as well as their profile in the lived religion.

As the Minor Rite invocation of the 36 Official Generals immediately moves discussion to the subject of the Three Altars 三壇, to adequately deal with the issues raised by Three Altars symbolism we must first turn to this important topic.

Symbols of the Three Altars 三壇 in the Táinán-area Minor Rite

In the Táinán area Black-Head tradition-group, ritual begins with explicit and repeated confirmation in the liturgy that declares the tradition itself to be a manifestation

of the Three Altars 三壇 (Sām duāḥ/Sān Tán) school. In the critical altar-opening 開壇 formula that initiate ritual, in which the Ritual Master opens ritual time, mobilizes the spiritual emissaries that transmit his commands, and consecrates the ritual implements, the term Three Altars is repeatedly invoked as the authority which empowers the Ritual Master. Of the nine or so formula used during this altar-opening stage, revealingly Xuántiān Shàngdì 玄天上帝 (i.e. Zhēnwǔ 真武) is invoked twice, while formula for the ritual implements most associated with the Ritual Master –Saint Golden Whip 金鞭聖者 and the Celestial Imperial Ruler 天皇尺 (or, what I call the Celestial Gavel), as well as for consecrating the exorcistic salt-and-rice all conclude:

> I honor the Reverend Saints of the Three Altars, [you spirits] may not tarry!
> 吾奉三壇尊聖, 不得久留停!

Then, in the final portion of this opening section, where the Ritual Master announces the purpose and content of the ritual, and summons the Officials and Generals of the altar by cracking the whip three times, with the third crack of the whip he explicitly declares his own identity, saying:

> Three stokes [of the whip]! All Officials and Generals swiftly arrive before the altar and hear the Three Altars Ritual Master Unfold the Altar and Summon the Spirits [plus whatever other ritual programs are to be performed], to bless and protect every family within the entire precinct, men and women, old and young, all healthy and safe, urgently, as the law commands!
> 三打諸員官將速到壇前, 聽三壇法師羅壇請神, 庇佑合境合家, 男女老幼皆康寧, 急急如律令

This phrase, "hear the Three Altars Ritual Master" is pronounced by all lineages of the Black-Head tradition group in Táinán, regardless of so-called "pài" 派 or lineage-group

designations; the Three Altars symbol and label clearly transcends the largely arbitrary markers of pài lineage-group affiliation.

Beyond these critical altar-opening formula, the term Three Altars appears throughout the invocations, with the 36 Official Generals explicitly identified as "Official Generals of the Three Altars" 三壇官將 in the final line which commands them to descend into the altar-space. A survey of Three Altars references in major Táinán-area Minor Rite collections reveals both their extent and concentration in association with particular symbols:

Table 2.2 Three Altars 三壇 References in the CXT and HST[63] folios:

CXT 誠心壇		
CXT 6 寶劍大將軍	今在三壇展威靈	
CXT 24 三壇猛將	（合壇, 長篇）	
CXT58 三十六將	三壇猛將聞吾請	36 Official Generals
CXT116 押兵盧二娘	三壇猛將進來聽	
CXT140 哪吒太子	三壇廟上展威靈	Standard Black-Head closing invocation
CXT 153 法天張聖者	三壇使符江舍人	
CXT 157 中壇元帥	扶助三壇真自在	
CXT166 辛元帥	敕封三壇伏群魔	
CXT 168 捉鬼大將	拜請三壇門下捉大將	
CXT 169 縛鬼大將	拜請三壇門下縛大將	
CXT 170 枷鬼大將	拜請三壇門下枷大將...捉入三壇為正法	
CXT 171 鎖鬼大將	拜請三壇門下鎖大將	

Note CXT 168-171, the Four Grand Generals 四大將 Seize, Fetters, Cangue and Lock, cognate with HST 4:28-31

HST 和勝堂		
Altar-opening formula (開壇 Kāi-tán KT)		
KT5 散米鹽密咒	吾奉三壇尊聖	consecration of the salt-and-rice
KT 6 天皇尺密咒	吾奉三壇尊聖	consecration of the Celestial Ruler
KT 8 聖者密咒	吾奉三壇尊聖	consecration of the Holy Whip
KT 9 吾鞭獻出鬼神驚	三打諸員官將速到壇前聽三壇法師羅壇請神庇佑合境合家男女老幼皆康寧	statement of ritual content and purpose

[63] Here not counting the altar-opening formula 開壇密咒, which are not written in the regular invocation book, and which are likewise different in their composition and performative context as well, i.e. they are spoken by the Ritual Master rather than sung by the troupe, etc. See the presentation of the Purification of the Altar ceremony for the complete discussion of these formula in context.

HST 1:38 哪吒元帥	三壇廟上展真靈	
HST 1:39 三十六官將	三壇官將隨吾請...三壇官將速降臨	36 Official Generals
HST 1:56 太乙真君	投入三壇鬼神驚	
HST 1:49 張聖者神咒	三壇祖師江舍人	Lord-of-the-Rite Zhāng as 1st of the Five Camps
HST 1:53 三十三天神咒	扶佐三壇真如在	this and 2:21 for Nézhà
HST 2:21 金吒大太子	隨吾三壇行法界	
HST 4:2 伏魔七星劍將軍	住在三壇展威靈...保護三壇眾門徒	Ritual 7-Star Sword
HST 4:4 七星黑旗金道長	身授玄天上帝敕，敕封三壇救眾生	General Black Flag
HST 4:5 天皇尺將軍	鎮守三壇護法門...保護三壇真顯應	the Celestial Ruler
HST 4:6 金鞭蛇聖者	降在三壇展威靈...保護三壇捉妖精...三壇官將顯真行	
HST 4:7 法鼓將兄弟	謹請三壇法鼓左右兵	stanza for the Ritual Drum
HST 4:16 巡爐鳴鴨使者	久歸三壇為使者...護佑三壇真顯應	
HST 4:28 捉大將	謹請三壇捉大將	
HST 4:29 縛大將	謹請三壇縛大將	
HST 4:30 枷大將	謹請三壇枷大將...投入三壇助正法	
HST 4:31 鎖大將	謹請三壇鎖大將	

These extensive Three Altars references in the invocation texts reveal several points. First, the ritual implements themselves –Saint Golden Whip (HST 4:6), the Celestial Ruler (HST 4:5), the Seven-star Sword (CXT 6, HST 4:2), and even the ritual drums 法鼓 (HST 4:7) –here called 'general-brother' 法鼓將兄弟– all these basic instruments of the ritual tradition are specifically associated with the Three Altars, as is General Black Flag 黑旗將軍. Interestingly, in the Hé Shèng Táng, there is a pair of images depicting General Black Flag and Saint Golden Whip as subordinate spirits on the altar, as these two are, together with the Celestial Ruler, the main exorcistic tools of the tradition, and are frequently used when enacting transformations over places (as in the purification of space) and people (as in healing and prophylactic ritual).[64] Hence, all of the ritual implements of the tradition are specifically connected or identified with Three Altars symbolism.

[64] These two spirit-images in the Héshèng Táng also contain the cremated ashes of Ritual Master Wáng Lú 王魯 (Ong Lok) in the image of Saint Golden Whip, and those of his longtime companion, the

This pattern of identification extends to the Ritual Master him [and sometimes her-] self, as demonstrated by these same altar-opening formula, and numerous 7-character invocations. To many Táinán-area Ritual Masters, this term Three Altars is primarily understood to be a moniker of self-address or self-identification with which the Ritual Master refers to him or herself during ritual performance. This was Ritual Master Lín Dòuzhī's explanation of the term Three Altars, or Sān Tán 三壇: he understood the phrase to be a term of self-address for the Ritual Master, as in HST 2:21 金吒大太子: 隨吾三壇行法界 "follow me, Three Altars, as I move in the ritual space". Several other references echo this same usage (CXT 157 , HST 1:53, 4:6, 4:16) where phrases like "protect the Three Altars, seize fiendish spirits"保護三壇捉妖精 suggest that the Three Altars being protected or assisted is in fact the Ritual Master. To Ritual Master Lín the term Three Altars meant precisely this and nothing more, the term the Ritual Master uses to refer to himself while performing ritual. He was not aware of a ritual tradition by the name Three Altars, nor did he have any idea what three altars this term might refer to. The rural Ritual Masters of Táinán County, however, are commonly referred to as "Three Altars Ritual Masters" 三壇法師, but again beyond this phrase as a label, none appear to have any understanding of the phrase as referring to something more specific, or to three particular altars. Some Pénghú practitioners with whom I have spoken also use this term to broadly designate their ritual tradition as well, but likewise without any specific idea about what the term might indicate beyond the tradition as a whole.

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former Spirit-medium of Xuántiān Shàngdì, inside the image of General Black Flag, the talismanic flag associated with Xuántiān Shàngdi. Not only are these two still venerated on the altar, they are carried in procession as Xuántiān Shàngdì's subordinate spirits together on the sedan.

As we know from Davis' history of Sòng Ritual Method[65], and from fieldwork in western Fújiàn by John Lagerwey and Yè Míngshēng,[66] a historical tradition called the Three Altars has exerted a profound influence within the Popular-Tantric realm of the Ritual Method movement, and which evidently began as a form of lay Buddhist ritual practice and devotion, from which it developed into a more 'popular' form, independent of explicitly Buddhist affiliation.[67] The invocations here cited likewise clearly depict the Three Altars as a school or tradition (HST 1:38 1:56, CXT 168-171), with a Three Altars Temple 三壇廟 mentioned in every Black-Head performance (HST 1:38).

Ultimately it is Yè Míngshēng's fieldwork in Fújiàn which enables us to confirm what the Minor Rite invocations themselves attest: the Three Altars are, or came to be defined by a trinitarian pantheon found throughout Ritual Method texts of Táiwān and Fújiàn, and nowhere more prominently than in the Taiwanese traditions. In his paper "Preliminary discussion of the popularization of the Yoga school", Yè cites the altar-system of Jiànyáng Lűshān priests, which helps confirm what other evidence already strongly suggests. While discussing the "popularization" 世俗化 of Tantric traditions, Yè emphasizes the inclusion of Popular deities –in this case Zhēnwǔ– among Tantric altar-pantheons:

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[65] See Davis, *Society and the Supernatural,* 122-143.

[66] Lagerwey "Popular Ritual Specialists in West Central Fujian," in 《社會，民族與文化展演國際研究會論文集》, 王秋桂，莊英章，陳中民編者，(臺北市：漢學研究中心，民 90 [2001]),467-9, 499; *Jiànyang* 58 (liturgical text section); *Guǎngjì Tán* 2:159, 2:161,2:173, 2:177 .

[67] Davis, *Society and the Supernatural,* 122: "the Rites of the Three Altars...appears to have been at the center of a lay Buddhist association, [however] I would like to suggest that we pursue the rites themselves within the context of the popularization of Tantric Buddhism after the Tang." Likewise, Yè Míngshēng (1999) characterizes the Three Altars as representative of the "popularization" 世俗化 of Esoteric Buddhism.

> "Like with the Daoist altars of the Jiànyáng [area] Lűshān school's 'Three Altars Lords of the Religion' are thus 'Lóngshù of the left altar as Sire-King, Zhēnwǔ of the right altar guarding with a mighty manner, Great Vajra of Impure Traces (Huìjī) of the central altar."
> 如建陽閭山教道壇之"三壇教主"是以"左壇龍樹為公王，右壇真武鎮威風，中壇穢跡大金剛"。[68]

This arrangement is again confirmed by the altar-scrolls called the "Three Altars Diagram" 三壇圖, which Yè describes:

> On the left, right, and center of the painted spirit images (Three Altars Diagram), above there appears a series of three images of Vajra Huìjī, his spirit-seat is in the center of the diagram, with Zhēnwǔ on his left flank, Lóngshù on his right flank. The central Huìjī has three heads and six arms, with his upper arms, in the left hand he holds the sun, and the right holds the moon...This serves as a classic example of the popularization of the deities of the Yoga school.
> 在左右中三幅神圖(三壇圖)上一連出現三個穢跡金剛神像，其神位於圖中央，左脅真武，右脅龍樹，中之穢跡金剛三面頭，六隻手，上之手為左托日，右托月...此為典型的瑜伽教信仰神之世俗化.[69]

Thus in Fújiàn we have sources which explicitly affirm what Lűshān and related Ritual Method texts from Táinán to western Fújiàn already make clear: as a ritual system practiced by lay Ritual Masters, the eponymous Three Altars themselves refer to this core pantheon of Vajra Huìjī 穢跡金 in the central altar, Lóngshù Wáng 龍樹王, the deified

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[68] Yè Míngshēng,「試論"瑜伽教"之衍變及其世俗化事像」，《佛教研究》第 8 期(1999): 256-264. This passage comes from his part 三, '瑜伽的世俗化'. This mainland Chinese journal can be difficult to obtain; I initially made use of an online version, and will refer to the author's sections rather than page numbers. (This online version is divided into two parts, ret. 9/2019): http://blog.xuite.net/linmengi08/twblog/127819075-試論"瑜伽教"之衍變及其世俗化事象（一）【葉明生】; http://blog.xuite.net/linmengi08/twblog/127819070-試論"瑜伽教"之衍變及其世俗化事象（二）【葉明生】

[69] Yè Míngshēng,「「試論"瑜伽教"之衍變及其世俗化事像」, part 三, '瑜伽的世俗化', end. Here, Yè argues that the association of Zhēnwǔ with these Tantric gods reflects the popularity of Zhēnwǔ among common people, which is at a basic level certainly true, but as I will argue below, this configuration is not just the result of simple borrowing of a deity due to their popularity among the general populace, but rather depicts the interactions among Tantric adepts and Spirit-mediums.

Nāgārjuna in the left altar, and the True Warrior Zhēnwǔ 真武 on the right. This structure of the Three Altars as defined by these three deities is among the most durable and widespread symbolic clusters in the entire, Tantric-Popular domain Ritual Method , and to this day it still forms the 'head' and exorcistic vanguard of the Minor Rite ritual structure. Moreover, in Táinán-area Minor Rite ceremony, the Three Altars label is used extensively in the opening formula in connection with the core sacra of the tradition, and when Ritual Masters refer to themselves. Thus at a basic level, the Táinán-area Minor Rite is defined, structured, and to some extent labeled by the symbols of the Three Altars.

Lagerwey has speculated that the Three Altars refers to the "three mountains" of Língshān 靈山 and Màoshān 茆山（茅山） and Lűshān 閭山, with each mountain representing different schools of Popular (or indeed Wū-ist) Ritual Method that have been joined into one meta-tradition around Lűshān in the center.[70] As one priest explained to Lagerwey (without reference to Three Altars), the three strips of red cloth on their ritual skirts "represented the three mountains Lingshan, Lüshan, and Maoshan."[71] From this testimony, Lagerwey then surmised that these three mountains, or the Wū-ist traditions they represent, were, in their union, the Three Altars.

While multiple interpretations and origins of the Three Altars symbols are certainly possible, Lagerwey's own fieldwork data confirms that the basic trinity I have indicated here –marked by variability in the central altar– is a common feature among the Ritual Masters' altars that he observed in western Fújiàn. For example, he notes that

[70] Lagerwey, "Taoism Among the Hakka in Fujian," in 《第一屆客家學國際研討會論文集》, 謝劍, 鄭赤琰編者 (香港: 香港中文大學, 1994), 499.
[71] Lagerwey, "Taoism Among the Hakka in Fujian," 483.

"Longshu (龍樹, or Nāgārjuna) is also found in the northwest Fujian county of Jianyang (建陽縣), where he is paired with Zhenwu but on either side of Jiulang fazhu (九郎法主), in a Lüshan context."[72] . Lagerwey further reports that "The one practitioner who said explicitly he belonged to the Yoga school, Yu Muxing of Jiangle, constructed his altar with Pu'an in the middle flanked by Longshu and Zhenwu'."[73] In observing these patterns, Lagerwey asks, "what is it that links Longshu and Zhenwu?"

I believe we can confidently conclude that it is precisely this core, triune pantheon of the Three Altars which links them, proving that even with (or the more so because of) the variable central seat, this pair is strongly linked as the "base" of a triadic structure, which historically has come to accommodate different Ritual Method spirits and Ancestral Masters at the triad's apex, from Pǔ-ān to a certain Língshān Śakya King 中壇靈山釋迦王 (a figure linked symbolically with Huìjī) , and the Third Prince 三太子, Prime Marshal of the Central Altar 中壇元帥. In Táinán-area traditions that we may deduce originated in the Tóng-ān and Xiàmén region, Bǎoshēng Dàdì has likewise been installed in this central position, an adaptation visible in several liturgical formula for spirit-soldiers, and most fully articulated in the Ānpíng Miàoshòu Gōng's liturgy for the Grand Rewarding of the Troops.[74]

In all of these arrangements, while the central altar assignment has changed, on the left and right Lóngshù Wáng and Zhēnwǔ have steadfastly remained in their places at the

[72] Lagerwey, "Popular Ritual Specialists in West Central Fujian," 500.
[73] Ibid.
[74] See my discussion of The Third Prince and his assumption of the Central Altar position for the relevant references; discussion of Bǎoshēng Dàdì as central of the Three Altars follows below.

base of the triad for centuries. It may even be that variation in the central altar position has enhanced the stability of this pair, as a major iconographic and symbolic change like swapping out the central deity might favor a strong element of continuity elsewhere, lest too much change render the pantheon unrecognizable.

These triadic symbols and the pair at its base have endured for some considerable time given their geographic distribution. There may possibly have been other –and plural– meanings or reasons behind a Tantric Three Altars school of the Sòng, but whatever the case, it appears likely that during the "popularization" of the Three Altars away from its earlier para-monastic or devotional contexts, the Three Altars came to be defined by and synonymous with this triune pantheon of Vajra Huìjī 穢跡金剛, Lóngshù Wáng 龍樹王 and Zhēnwǔ 真武, an arrangement which has endured with remarkable fidelity in the Táinán-area Minor Rite, even alongside the parallel assignment of Lǐ Nézhà as Prime Marshal of the Central Altar, who has not completely replaced Huìjī in the invocations.

Moreover, in this triune pantheon, we see a strongly Tantric image of the Ritual Method synthesis itself, as here Nāgārjuna (or Lóngshù in Chinese)[75] –in essence an Ancestral Master-like deified ritual expert, is paired with Zhēnwǔ, a deity fully cast in the image of a Spirit-medium, whose streaming hair and bare feet became adapted into the Ritual Master's techniques of liturgical identification. As an important deity in the early

[75] Lóngshù 龍樹 literally means "dragon-tree" and represents an interpretive compound derived from his Sanskrit name Nāgārjuna, in which Nāga means a kind of divine serpent, translated as "dragon" 龍 (Lóng) in Chinese, while the name Arjuna was a name of a kind of tree, and in the *Biography of Lóngshù Bodhisattva* 龍樹菩薩傳 (T.2047a) it states that "His mother gave birth to him under a tree. She named him 'Arjuna" because Arjuna was also the name of that [kind of] tree. By means of the Nāgas he perfected his Way. Thus his name was further supplemented by 'Nāga', and so he is called 'Dragon-tree'" [i.e. tree of the Nāgas, or divine serpents]. 其母樹下生之。因字阿周陀那。阿周陀那樹名也。以龍成其道。故以龍配字。號曰龍樹也.

Daoist Ritual Method, by his nature and iconography Zhēnwǔ embodies the exchange and collaboration among Daoist Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums, and represents nothing less than a deified Spirit-medium, elevated to the rank of a major divinity by the innovations of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ.[76] Thus within the "base" of this Three Altars pantheon, we have iconic representatives of the constituent ritual traditions whose interaction and exchange engendered the Ritual Method synthesis: a deified Tantric adept of Indic or Central Asian appearance in the figure of Lóngshù Wáng, and an ostensibly Daoist deity who in fact represents the profound influence of Spirit-mediums and their techniques within the Ritual Method synthesis.

That Vajra Huìjī heads this pantheon is at once a testimony to his prominence in Tantric ritual of all kinds, ranging from monastic Buddhist rites[77] to 'popularized' Ritual Methods, as well as to the primacy of purification in the opening of ritual performance, an ideology or intuition generally shared by both Chinese and Indo-Buddhist concepts of ritual, and which may be a near-universal in human religion. Specifically, Huìjī is named for his specialization as an agent of ritual purification, as his Sanskrit name Ucchuṣma[78]can be taken to mean "eater of impure traces", a meaning simultaneously indicated and obscured its Chinese translation Huìjī 穢跡, which literally means traces of filth or impurity, but lacks

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[76] For the earliest depiction of Zhēnwǔ, complete with his classic iconography see 太上助國救民總真秘要 j.2, ZHDZ 30:318. Together, the Celestial Master and Zhēnwǔ are the most frequently subjects of the Daoist Ritual Officer's liturgical identification, with an early example of the latter in 太上助國救民總真祕要 j.5, 上清隱書骨髓靈文中, 召山精野怪符, ZHDZ 30:340.

[77] The important subject of Vajra Huìjī in Tantric-influenced rites performed by monastic Buddhists has yet to be intensively explored, in part because of the relative neglect of ritual in fields related to Buddhist studies. Daniel Stevenson's excellent study of Buddhist ritual in the Sòng presents numerous examples where Huìjī and his well-known invocation 穢跡咒 were used in ritual as a key formula of purification. See Stevenson 2015:372-3, and 414.

[78] See Davis, *Society and the Supernatural,* 128-141, and for the name Ucchuṣma, p.129 n.39.

notions of eating or removing these traces, as implied by the Sanskrit original. This will become relevant to the history of the Minor Rite, in which the name Huìjī has become widely disguised by semi-homophonous characters, a condition likely in reaction to the problematic notion of "traces of impurity" being invoked into the ritual space.

In the Táinán region, the original, classic Three Altars pantheon –with an orthographically disguised Huìjī in the center– still stands at the head of the Minor Rite altar system, where these three are still invoked first at the exorcistic vanguard of the entire ceremony, whether initiated by the standard United Altar 合壇 invocation (HST 1:2/CXT 11, CXT 24), or by the 36 Official Generals 三十六官將 (HST 1:39/CXT 58), as is usually the case for longer rituals in Ānpíng. Often, ritual is resumed after a break with the Thirty-six Official Generals , as in the Héshèng Táng (and other Black-Head altar's) Rewarding of the Troops 賞兵 (犒賞) and Celebration of Longevity 祝壽 ceremonies, a point which again emphasizes how this Three Altars trinity serves as the head and leading edge of the Minor Rite altar-system, a prevailing pantheon and front-line unit which always goes first to open the road, as it were, for the procession of gods invoked in the ceremony, with Huìjī the Eater of Impurity always invoked first, in keeping with the priority of purification in ritual performance.

With this background we are in a position to examine the Minor Rite invocation for the 36 Official Generals, in which the top or beginning stages differ in notable ways from the Door Gods pantheon. This stanza is one of the core invocations of the regional tradition, and with but minor variations can be found in altars of every locality and tradition-group. Analysis of this invocation requires several steps of reconstruction, a

process made clearer by first examining two representative versions of the text as-is, and then turning to my reconstruction, which has been aided by the uniquely preferable manuscript of the Ānpíng Miàoshòu Gōng. In the texts that follow, problematic content awaiting reconstruction is underlined.

CXT 58 三十六將

拜請三十六員諸猛將 降魔氣穢大金光 1
八臂化身驅邪穢　九天教主龍樹王 2
北極眞武大將軍　天皇天后二位尊 3
高天協聖炳乾坤　張蕭劉連鎮四方 4
拜請中壇都元帥　統領天兵展神通 5
鄧率二將把天門　高岳元帥斬五瘟 6
捉縛枷鎖四大將　虎馬珈羅二位尊 7
五顯龍官馬華光　奇地猛烈二電光 8
馬府靈官真顯現　顯現英雄展神通 9
靈通哥々威顯現　拜請王孫三相公 10
溫康馬趙四元帥　勤何李紀四仙姑 11
吞精食鬼二大將　降龍伏虎二位尊 12
江洪猛勇二仙官　咒水真人展神通 13
移山倒海二大將　殷郊太子顯真身 14
拜請金光二舍人　二位舍人化現身 15
三十六員諸猛將　濟到壇前驅邪魔 16
三壇猛將聞吾請　濟到壇前展神通 17
若有邪魔侵吾法　驅邪殺鬼滅妖精 18
法門弟子專拜請　三十六將降臨來 19

HST 1:39 三十六官將

1 謹請三十六將大神通　鳳毛孜穢眾金剛
2 八百化身驅邪祟　九天降主龍樹王
3 北極真武大將軍　天王天顯二聖尊
4 高天聖凡聖乾坤　張蕭劉連鎮四方
5 中壇哪吒大元帥　統領天兵展神通
6 金卒二將把天門　趙岳元帥斬五瘟
7 捉縛枷鎖四大將　馬虎伽羅二威尊
8 五顯靈官馬花公　旗帥英烈二溫康
9 靈通高高真顯現　王孫三賽三相公
10 康趙黑白四元帥　勤何李紀四仙姑
11 吞精吃鬼二大將　降龍伏虎大慈悲
12 三壇官將隨吾請　齊到壇前展神通
13 弟子壇前專拜請　三壇官將速降臨
火急如律令

These two texts are representative of versions which circulate in Táiwān and Pénghú,[79] though most are closer to the Héshèng Táng 13-line rendition, while the Chéngxīn Tán version is unique in its length, wherein the more minor figures of the Door Gods pantheon,

[79] The Pénghú/Lűshān lineage-group Chìfàntáo Gōng 赤樊桃宮 version has only 12 lines, with both some preferable identifications and additional corrupt, homophonous phrases. Wú Yǒngméng (2006:192) provides a Pénghú/Pǔ-ān lineage-group source nearly identical to the Chìfàntáo Gōng text, but with only 11 lines. Both Pénghú sources lack the Four Immortal Ladies, as well as the pair Spirit-Swallower and Ghost-Eater.

plus certain alternatives, have been included.[80] Counting the clearly named or indicated figures of the Héshèng Táng source yields only 35 deities, with the unidentified Língtōng Gēgē 靈通哥哥[高高, Mínnán homophones] in line 9 is perhaps meant to be counted, as this same phrase appears in the stanza for the Lűshān Holy Ancestor (HST 2:6 閭山聖祖). The Chéngxīn Tán version would, by a conservative estimate, appear to include no less than 48 separate deities, a problem evidently arising from the inclusion of more minor gods of the Door Gods pantheon on the one hand, and the ambiguity of numerous figures or symbols toward the beginning on the other.

Of greatest significance are the symbols and phrases in the first four lines. In line one, between the character 穢 huì, or "filth," and the term "Vajra" 金剛, we can infer that this line is meant to invoke Vajra Huìjī.[81] In line 2, if we accept the preferable Chéngxīn Tán phrase 八臂 "eight arms" –also found in the Pénghú sources, then this would appear to be a relatively rare image of Tantric iconography in the Minor Rite genre, though eight arms are only occasionally associated with Huìjī,[82] and elsewhere in the Chéngxīn Tán

[80] Moreover, the CXT collection features individual invocations for all of the 36 Official Generals, including these more minor or obscure figures

[81] Wú Yǒngméng (2006:192) has also redacted this line of his text to read "Subduer of demons, Great Vajra Huìjī 降魔穢跡大金剛, based on his own rather tentative and idiosyncratic research on Vajra Huìjī (2011:61-76); however, nowhere does he identify the prominent Three Altars pantheon headed by Huìjī, (see for example the diagram of the altar pantheon he presents in 2009:73), nor does he question other corrupt characters in the 36 Official Generals text offered in his 2006 textbook on Taiwanese religion. For example, his text's version of line 8 with Mǎ Huáguāng 馬華光 reads 五顯靈通馬辛罡, which aside from the Five Manifestations 五顯 has lost the clarity of its other referents. Yet even with the clue of Five Manifestations, Wú apparently sees no need for further reconstruction in this case. Likewis,e Prime Marshal Dèng 鄧元帥, here paired with his frequent partner Prime Marshal Xìn 辛, in Wú's Pénghú source is written in a Mínnán homophone 丁 rather than 鄧 , yet this is likewise unamended in his published text. See Wú Yǒngméng 吳永猛,「臺灣本土法教」，在於《臺灣本土宗教信仰》, 吳永猛,主編 (臺北縣：空中大學，民 97 [2008]), 192.

[82] See Hsieh, 《道密法圓》, 115-120; Flanigan, "The Fire Jiào."

volume, there is an invocation for Eight-Armed Nézhà (CXT 70 八臂哪吒), a phrase repeated in an invocation for the Fierce Generals of the Rear Altar (CXT 23 後壇猛將). Do these eight arms allude to the Third Prince Nézhà in this central position, or are they simply describing Vajra Huìjī, or is there some conflation of the two in progress here? A simple reading gives us an eight-armed Huìjī, but the specific provenance of this iconography is somewhat ambivalent.

What the rest of lines 2 and 3 make clear is that the entire pantheon here is headed by the spirits of the Three Altars: Vajra Huìjī, Lóngshù Wáng [Nāgārjuna], and Zhēnwǔ. At one level, these three deities serve here in their capacity as exorcistic vanguard, effecting purification at the commencement of ritual. But they also signify the preeminence of the Three Altars tradition at the forefront of ritual and the symbols that follow. By this gesture, the pantheon of the Door Gods has been reconfigured to acknowledge the primacy of the Ritual Master and his tradition, which are here shown to lead a series of important gods of Daoist-brand Ritual Method. The identification of the entire pantheon with the Three Altars is made explicit in the final line (13) of the Héshèng Táng and other Black-Head tradition-group texts, where the "Official Generals of the Three Altars" 三壇官將 are commanded to "swiftly descend."

Beyond the initial Three Altars trinity, the texts present rather vague symbols in lines 3 and 4. In the second couplet of line 3, the Chéngxīn Tán offers the plausible "Two Venerables, Celestial Emperor and Celestial Empress" 天皇天后二位尊, while the Héshèng Táng has "Two Holy Venerables, Celestial King and Celestial Manifestation" 天王天顯二聖尊. Pénghú sources here read "Two Saints, Descend-from-Heaven and

Celestial Roaming" 天降天遊二聖者.[83] In the next couplet (4), the Chéngxīn Tán has what we might render as "The Assisting Saint of High Heaven, steering Heaven and Earth" 高天協聖炳乾坤,[84] while the Héshèng Táng verges on unintelligibility here with a phrase 高天聖凡聖乾坤 which cannot be meaningfully rendered, or clearly comprehended in the original. Pénghú sources fare no better, with the Lűshān Chìfàntào Gōng reading "High Heaven gives rise to the Saint and joins with the Heavenly light,"高天興聖併天光 and Wú Yǒngméng's Pǔ-ān lineage-group source offering "The high dragon gives rise to the saint and joins with the Heavenly Polar-constellation 高龍興聖併天罡."[85]

These texts present a remarkably unclear image at what should be a high and important station in this major pantheon. While the "Heavenly Emperor and Empress" are at least a comprehensible set of symbols, why are they here in a pantheon of fierce, exorcistic generals? Luckily, the text of the Ānpíng Miàoshòu Gōng provides the answer to this riddle, where its versions of lines 3 and 4 read:

> Grand General Zhēnwǔ of the North Pole
> Tiānpéng, Tiānyòu [here, written Tiānxiàn 天献], two holy venerables,
> Yìshèng 翊聖 of High Heaven follows Heaven and Earth...
> 北極真武大將軍　　天篷天献二聖尊
> 高天翊聖隨乾坤　　(張蕭劉連鎮四方)

Of sources I have examined from Táinán to Zhānghuà and Pénghú, only this version preserves what in fact the sounds of the other corrupt versions intimate, that these are the Daoist Four Saints of the North Pole: Zhēnwǔ and his "talisman emissary" the Black Killer,

[83] Both the Chìfàntào Gōng text and Wú Yǒngméng's source give this reading.
[84] Reading 柄/抦 for CXT 炳.
[85] Wú Yǒngméng,「臺灣本土法教」, 192.

aka the "Assisting Saint" 翊聖, and what have, by the Sòng become the Tantric-style pair of this quartet, Tiānpéng and Tiānyòu, with the last syllable of Tiānyòu 猷 written here with a close alternate character 献 pronounced xiàn in Mandarin, and heň in Mínnán. As even Daoist priests in the region have come to call Tiānyòu "Tiānxiàn" (ten heň) this is not a corruption introduced by Ritual Masters, but a region-wide adaptation.[86] This situation explains the alternate readings we find in the sources here:

Héshèng Táng:	天王 ten onǵ 天顯 ten heň=
Miàoshòu Gōng:	天蓬 ten panǵ 天献 ten heň
Pénghú:	天降 ten gang̍ 天遊 ten yieẃ=
Proper Daoist version:	天蓬 ten panǵ 天猷 ten yieẃ

Thus commencing this major invocation of the Mínnán-region Ritual Master tradition, we have the spirits of the Three Altars leading the Daoist Four Saints of the North Pole, with Zhēnwǔ serving double duty among these two sets. Despite the prominence of these symbols in the religious culture, and their nearly-complete representation in the Ānpíng Miàoshòu Gōng manuscript, the identities of these deities and of the two important groups they form have been forgotten by practitioners over generations of transmission, while beyond the figure of Vajra Huìjīī, other researchers who cite or present these sources have not identified them either.[87]

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[86] My Zhānghuà source has also preserved Tiānpéng and "Tiānxiàn", written 天蓬天獻(獻 sic., not 献). But the Assisting Saint 翊聖 has been obscured in this source as well, where that phrase reads 高天闕聖併天罡.

[87] Wáng Zhāowén (2005:58-61), citing Yè Míngshēng's research on the Yújiā 瑜伽 tradition (1999) first identified the orthographically disguised Vajra Huìjī in the Táinán-area invocations of the United Altar 合壇(discussed below) and the 36 Official Generals, but did not raise the connection with the Three Altars, nor clarify the Daoist Four Saints which follow. Wú Yǒngméng (2011:61-76), writing without benefit of other scholarship, also identifies Vajra Huìjī in this position, but likewise has not made further

Based on these clarifications and comparison among manuscripts, I can now offer a partial reconstruction of the 36 Official Generals invocation, though if modeled on the Chéngxīn Tán version there are a total of 41 (or more) deities, whereas if we stop where the Héshèng Táng and similar texts do, then we appear to have 32. But with repetitions (Prime Marshals Kāng and Zhào, for example, are listed twice in the Héshèng Táng source) plus other variables, ultimately there is no completely stable underlying text to be uncovered. However, most sources are nearly identical up to lines 9 or 10 (with Prime Marshal Ōng Suⁿ 王孫, deity #24, by my count), where the pantheon of many sources stops.[88] As the invocation for the chthonic figure of Prime Marshal Ōng Suⁿ serves the standard way to end ritual in the Táinán region, this association may well have inclined Ritual Masters to assign him to the rearguard and terminus of this pantheon as well. Whatever the case, it is after this point that repetitions and the greatest variation appears. However, if repetitions are not double-counted, then a reconstruction based on the Chéngxīn Tán yields a total of 36 if the top 5 deities are not included, but instead seen as the leaders, rather than members of the pantheon itself.

A reconstructed text of the Thirty-six Official Generals 三十六官將, based on HST, CXT, and MSG sources:

三十六官將[89]

謹請三十六將大神通　伏魔穢跡大金剛[90]

八臂化身驅邪祟[91]　九天教主龍樹王[92]

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any connection or mention of the Three Altars or disguised members of the Four Saints of the North Pole.

[88] Such as the Miàoshòu Gōng version, both Pénghú sources, and my Zhānghuà source.

[89] HST has「關將」, which also appears in CXT 43 李氏仙姑.

[90] HST reads「鳳毛改穢眾金剛」, CXT:「降魔氣穢大金光」, 光 and 剛 are homophones gongˆ.

[91] CXT gives「八臂化身驅邪穢」;

[92] Here following CXT「九天教主龍樹王」; the Black-Head texts have 九天降主龍樹王, "Lord of submission".

北極真武大將軍　　天蓬天猷二聖尊
高天翊聖隨乾坤　　張蕭劉連鎮四方
中壇哪吒大元帥　　統領天兵展神通
鄧辛二將把天門[93]　　趙岳元帥斬五瘟
捉縛枷鎖四大將　　馬虎伽羅二威尊
五顯靈官馬華光[94]　　旗帥英烈二溫康[95]
靈通高高真顯現[96]　　王孫三使三相公
溫康馬趙四元帥[97]　　勤何李紀四仙姑
吞精吃鬼二大將　　降龍伏虎大慈悲[98]
江黃猛勇二仙官[99]　　咒水真人展神通
移山倒海二大將　　殷郊太歲顯真身
拜請金康二舍人[100]　　二位舍人化現身
三壇官將隨吾請　　齊到壇前展神通
弟子壇前專拜請　　三壇官將速降臨
火急如律令

I reverently summon the Thirty-six Generals of great spiritual power,
Subduer of demons, Great Vajra [who consumes the] Traces of Impurity,[101]

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[93] Here following the preferable MSG source; HST reads「金卒二將把天門」; CXT:「鄧率二將把天門」. The Pénghú CFTG also has the preferable 鄧辛二將, whereas Wú Yǒngméng's Pǔ-ān Pénghú source (2006:192) has the Mínnán homophone 丁辛二將.

[94] Following MSG; HST has the homophonous「五顯靈官馬花公」, CXT:「五顯龍官馬華光」, with 龍 and 靈 also Mínnán homophones (linnǵ)

[95] Again following MSG, though I have kept the HST 旗帥 where MSG has 奇帥; CXT reads「奇地猛烈二電光」with the problematic variants here all semi-homophones.

[96] This phrase 靈通高高 is written in the homophonous variant 靈通哥哥 both in MSG and CXT, as well as in the Lűshān Ancestral Master/Holy Ancestor invocation of both HST and the Pénghú CFTG; this latter source has 靈通各各, "each and every one [possessing] spiritual power," another alternative reading. As the colloquial「哥哥」seems unlikely for this genre, I have kept the more descriptive language of that seems to indicate the "height" of the spiritual power of these deities, rather than representing yet another figure named "Older Brother Spiritual Power," though this possibility cannot be ruled out.

[97] Following CXT; HST has 康趙黑白四元帥. MSG lacks this line and essentially ends after Ōng Suń 王孫.

[98] HST essentially ends here, with the two lines of concluding language common to all of these sources. The following two lines are taken from CXT, and present figures which except for 咒水真人 are represented in the Door Gods.

[99] Following the Door Gods to change CXT 洪 anǵ to 黃 hnǵ.

[100] Here following the Door Gods to change CXT 光 gonǵ to 康 konǵ.

[101] Reconstructed line from other Ānpíng and CXT, none of which have 穢跡 Impure Traces, but which all attempt to make sense of the term in different ways. CXT 58 has 降魔氣穢大金光, the MSG folio 伏魔脩穢眾金剛. The Chìfàntáo Gōng has 去穢大金剛, "Great Vajra Who Removes Impurity], a plausible paraphrase of Huìjī's name. Given that all of my available sources have variations of X 穢大金剛, such phrasing might have been traditional before the identity of Huìjī became obscured.

Eight-armed transformation-body, drive out perverse hauntings,
The Nine-heavens Lord of the Religion, King Dragon-tree [Nāgārjuna].
True Warrior of the North Pole, Grand General,
Tiānpéng and Tiānyoù, two holy venerables.
The Assisting-Saint of High Heaven, follows Heaven and Earth.[102]
Zhāng, Xiāo, Liú, and Lián guard the four quarters,
Prime Marshal Nézhà of the Central Altar,
Commanding celestial soldiers, displaying spiritual power.
The two generals Dèng and Xìn bar heaven's gate,
Prime Marshals Zhào and Yuè slay the Five Epidemics.
Seize, Fetters, Cangue, and Lock, Four Grand Generals,
Mǎ and Hǔ Jiāluó, two mighty venerables.
The Spiritual Officer Mà Huáguāng of the Five Manifestations,
Flag-marshal, heroic ardor, the two Wēn and Kāng.
Manifesting spiritual power, towering high,
The Third Minister Third Emissary Ōng-suṅ,[103]
The Four Prime Marshals Wēn, Kāng, Mǎ and Zhào,[104]
The Four Immortal Ladies Qín, Hé, Lǐ, Jì .
The Two Great Generals Spirit-swallower and Ghost-eater,
The Two Venerables Dragon-vanquisher and Tiger-tamer.[105]
The two fierce Immortal Officers Gaṅ̀ and Hńǵ,
The Real Man of Invocation-water, display spiritual power.
I bow and summon the two Bailiffs Jīn and Kāng,
Two Bailiffs, transform and manifest bodily [presence].
Official Generals of the Three Altars, follow my summons,[106]
In even [ranks] arrive before the altar and display spiritual power.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Official Generals of the Three Altars swiftly descend!
Urgent as Fire, as the Law commands!

Table 2.3 Deities in a Reconstructed 36 Official Generals Invocation

穢跡金剛	Vajra Huìjī
龍樹王	Lóngshù Wáng/Nāgārjuna
真武	Zhēnwǔ
天蓬	Tiānpéng
天猷	Tiānyòu

Three Altars 三壇 Pantheon

Four Saints of the North Pole 北極四聖

Five Camps 五營

[102] Again following MSG 高天翊聖隨乾坤.
[103] Following MSG source reading the homophone 使 saì for 賽 saǐ.
[104] Reading the preferable CXT 58 溫康馬趙四元帥.
[105] Following CXT 58 降龍伏虎二位尊.
[106] CXT 58 continues with more standard figures of this particular pantheon, which have been elided here, but which are represented in door gods iconography and other representations.

張蕭劉連　Zhāng, Xiāo, Liú, Lián, the Four Saints
中壇哪吒大元帥 Prime Marshal Nézhà of the Central Altar
鄧元帥　Prime Marshal Dèng
辛元帥　Prime Marshal Xìn
趙元帥　Prime Marshal Zhào
岳元帥　Prime Marshal Yuè

Major Daoist Prime Marshals

捉縛枷鎖四大將 Seize, Bind, Cangue, Lock, Four Grand Generals
馬伽羅　Mǎ Jiāluó
虎伽羅　Mǎ Jiāluó

Pair of Tantric-derived subordinates

五顯靈官馬華光 Spirit Officer Mǎ Huáguāng of the Five Manifestations
溫元帥　Prime Marshal Wēn
康元帥　Prime Marshal Kāng
王孫元帥　Prime Marshal Ōng Suñ

Two more major Daoist Prime Marshals

Miàoshòu Gōng and Pénghú sources stop here

馬元帥　Prime Marshal Mǎ　(arguably the same as or related to Spirit Officer Mǎ 馬靈官)
勤何李紀四仙姑 Four Immortal Ladies Qín, Hé, Lǐ Jì
吞精食鬼　Generals Spirit-swallower and Ghost-Eater
降龍羅漢　Arhat who Vanquishes Dragons
伏虎羅漢　Arhat who Tames Tigers

Female Five Camps 女五營, here no 5th

Héshèng Táng pantheon ends here

江仙官　Immortal Officer Jiāng
黃仙官　Immortal Officer Huáng
咒水真人　Realized Man Invocation Water
移山倒海　Mover of Mountains, Drainer of Oceans
殷郊太歲　Great Year [Star Prime Marshal] Yīn Jiāo
金康二舍人　Bailiffs Jīn and Kāng

CXT adds these, mostly figures from Door Gods pantheon

The most important features of this pantheon are found in the first third or so, where an integration among the Tantric-Popular Three Altars and Daoist Four Saints of the North Pole leads the formation. These deities are completely absent from the Door Gods pantheon, and represent the two hemispheres of the Ritual Method movement. Much like the Tantric-Popular Three Altars, where the base pair features the Tantric imagery of Nāgārjuna flanked by Zhēnwǔ, depicted as a Spirit-medium, the Daoist Four Saints of the North Pole likewise offer an iconographic image of this synthesis among Tantric, Daoist, and Wū 巫 or Spirit-medium ritual, as by the Sòng, the pair Tiānpéng and Tiānyòu are

fully depicted as multi-headed, many-armed Tantric-style deities, while Zhēnwǔ and the Black Killer are shown as Wū or Spirit-mediums, with streaming hair and bare feet. Hence the joining of the Three Altars and Four Saints of the North Pole witnessed here is no mere "hybridization" among Red-Headed and Daoist symbols, but rather a conjunction of the two main "heads" or pantheon-topping groups of Ritual Method symbolism. Moreover, these two groups embody the relationships between the two hemispheres or domains of Ritual Method, as the Daoist-brand four have been given Daoist identities despite clear Tantric and Popular iconography, while the Tantric-Popular Three Altars, with its undisguised Tantric spirits, likewise shares the figure of Zhēnwǔ, indicating the fluidity and consonance between these two forms of Ritual Method.

Interestingly, this compound head of the pantheon is followed not by the high-ranking Daoist Prime Marshals as seen in the Door Gods version, but by the Ritual Master's primary subordinates, the Saints of the Five Camps, who as deified Tantric-style Ritual Masters are, with the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar, the figures most universally integrated into the structure and liturgical life of the temple-cult. While the major Daoist Prime Marshals follow, we can see that in this invocation, pride of place has gone to the symbols of the Ritual Master, even while identifying these with the main symbols of Daoist Ritual Method, which figure prominently in both Daoist healing ritual and the Jiào.

The 36 Official Generals is a grand pantheon, and in the Black-Head tradition-group, this invocation is used to commence more important rituals or ritual stages, like the Grand Rewarding of the Troops in Ānpíng (which amounts to a Rewarding of the 36

Official Generals), or the additional Celebration of Longevity 祝壽 ritual segment added to the Purification of the Altar ceremony as the way to celebrate a god's birthday. Thus while still frequently used in ritual, among the Black-Head altars at least,[107] its use typically marks a larger, expanded, or more important ceremony. Thus in more normal circumstances, and among all altars of all tradition-groups indigenous to the Táinán region, ritual is commenced with a structurally similar invocation called the United Altar 合壇 (ȟap duāȟ).

The United Altar 合壇

The invocation known as the United Altar is the primary and most universally performed invocation in Táinán-area traditions, appearing prominently in every single Táinán-area performance of the Purification of the Altar, with the sole exception found in Ānpíng, on those occasions the United Altar is replaced by its grander analogue, the 36 Official Generals. In Black-Head altars it is the first invocation to be sung (after the incanted "Jade Void," 玉虛, where this text is a standard preliminary), while in the Bǎo-ān Gōng/Xújiǎ tradition-group, the United Altar is sung in its own unique melody, right after the dramatic consecration of the whip, and thus forms a climactic moment in the ritual sequence. There are two versions of the United Altar, one more "standard" (HST 1:2/CXT 11) edition, and a "long version" (CXT 24) that features more deified Buddhist monks, and is essentially the same as a stanza from Zhāngzhōu published by Yè Míngshēng.[108]

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[107] Most altars of the Bǎo-ān Gōng/Xújiǎ lineage-group usually recite this invocation in the normal course of their Invitation of the Spirits/Purification of the Altar ceremony.

[108] Yè Míngshēng 葉明生,「試論"瑜伽教"之衍變及其世俗化事像」, 《佛教研究》, 第 8 期 (1999): 264.

Above all, the United Altar is perhaps most notable for being one of the two major stanzas that commence the main part of the ritual by invoking the Three Altars trinity of Vajra Huìjī, Lóngshù Wáng, and Zhēnwǔ, though again Vajra Huìjī's problematic name has been altered, and written in near-homophonous characters, a situation found in Lűshān ritual texts of northern Fújiàn as well.[109] Following the Three Altars deities are a relatively compact group of Tantric-derived, Popular, and Daoist deities, with symbols, though the "long" version is far more Buddhist by comparison. Both exemplify the fundamentally Tantric-Popular disposition of the Mínnán Minor Rite tradition, a symbolic orientation and historical legacy fully preserved in the ritual texts, even while the entire nexus of local cults and the Minor Rite is explicitly integrated into a Daoist ritual cosmos.

The United Altar HST 1:2 合壇 (here including redacted characters)
謹請合壇諸猛將　　穢跡金剛龍樹王[110]
北極鎮天真武大將軍　瑜伽五部三界輪[111]
金玉銀枝哪吒菩薩　　奉請關王元帥大將軍
都天殺鬼虎伽儸　　八萬四千大金剛
無千無萬諸猛將　　六丁六甲到壇前
祝門弟子焚香請
普唵祖師合壇官將速降臨
　　火急如律令

The United Altar
I reverently summon all the fierce generals of the United Altar,
Vajra [Who Consumes] Impure Traces, and King Dragon-tree [Nāgārjuna].
The Grand General, True Warrior who holds down heaven from the North Pole,
The Yoga Five Divisions, Wheel of the Three Realms.
Bodhisattva Nézhà of the gold, jade and silver branch,
In worship [I] summon Grand General Marshal Guān.

[109] See *Jiànyáng* 674, where Huìjī, as part of the Three Altars pantheon, is written 威跡金剛, similar to the Táinán-area conventions of 衛國金剛 (HST 1:2, CXT 11).
[110] Here Huìjī (ùe jiǩ) 穢跡 is written 衛國 (wēe goǩ) in most Táinán sources, though 威國 (also pronounced (wēe goǩ) appears in some manuscripts.
[111] For 五部 the original has 五步, both Mínnán homophones.

Capitoline Heaven Slayer of Ghosts Hǔ Jiāluó,
84-thousand great Vajra-protectors.
Uncountable thousands, uncountable myriad fierce generals,
The Six Dǐng and Six Jǐa spirits arrive before the altar.
Disciples of the school of blessing burn incense and summon,
Ancestral Master Pǔ-ān, Generals of the United Altar swiftly descend,
Urgent as fire, as the law commands!

The "Long Version" of the United Altar, with even more extensive Buddhist content:

CXT 24 三壇猛將[合壇，長篇」

請拜三壇諸猛將	衛國金光龍樹王[衛國金光=穢跡金剛]
北極眞武大將軍	瑜伽五部三教輪
普猛將軍大菩薩	三界張公下玄壇
觀音水府威顯現	泗州佛祖座九堂
清水泰山仝下降	八台金光[金剛]六天王
香山雪山二大聖	金珠銀朱二珠郎
都天元帥統天兵	哪吒殺鬼虎伽羅
三世諸佛々下降	什方一切降道場
法門弟子專拜請	三壇猛將降臨來
神	兵

Table 2.4 Deities and symbols of the United Altar invocation:

The Three Altars trinity:

穢跡金剛 Vajra Huìjī, (Uccuṣma), the Eater of Impure Traces
龍樹王 King Dragon-tree, Lóngshù Wáng (Ɬiong-čhiew-oŋ́), Nāgārjuna
真武 The True Warrior Zhēnwǔ

瑜伽五部: The Yújiā (Yoga) Five Divisions: A symbol or marker rather than a deity or being, this term Five Divisions 五部 originally referred to the Five Families of Buddhas and corresponding sections of certain esoteric maṇḍalas, especially in conjunction with the term Yoga 瑜伽, Davis concludes that "centuries earlier, '*wubu*' had become a kind of synecdoche for Esoteric Buddhism in general".[112] Such meaning is (or, was) in play here, where this phrase serves to identify the pantheon with the historic and authoritative Tantric ritual tradition of the same name.[113]

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[112] Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, 122.

[113] In canonical Buddhist sources, the phrase Yújiā Wǔbù 瑜伽五部 appears exclusively in biographies of eminent Buddhist renunciates such as the *Fózǔ Tǒngjì* 佛祖統紀 and *Gāosēng Zhuān* 高僧傳, where it serves as a name of label for a teaching 教 or tradition. For example, 佛祖統紀 54, j. 29, 諸宗立教志第十三, 瑜伽密教, 法師一行: 法師一行。張公謹之孫也。初從普寂落髮。盧鴻一見奇之。謂寂曰。此子非君所能模範。當從其東請南詢可也。師所至倒屣迎之。凡西竺貝葉陰陽緯讖。靡不窮究。傳密教於金剛無畏。結集毘盧遮那經疏登壇灌頂受瑜伽五部法。(Scripta Sinica).

哪吒菩薩 Bodhisattva Nézhà (Ƚuh-chiâ p̂ou-saʈ), aka the Third Prince Lǐ Nézhà 李哪吒三太子. Here called "Bodhisattva", and notably free from any association with the Central Altar, but rather depicted as one of several assistant generals under the Three Altars trinity.

關王元帥大將軍 Prime Marshal King Guān, Grand General. This is the deity Guān Yǔ 關羽, aka Guān Gōng 關公, here still addressed by titles used up through the Míng,[114] but superseded in the Qīng, when he was promoted to Grand Emperor 大帝.[115] Preservation of these older titles would suggest this invocation was composed prior to the early Qīng. Moreover, Prime Marshal Guān is here presented as a subordinate spirit within the pantheon, much as in several Daoist Ritual Method texts.[116]

都天殺鬼虎伽羅 Capitoline Heaven Slayer of Ghosts Hǔ Jiāluó (Ĥou-ḡei-luʎ). This (apparently) singular deity is mentioned in Bái Yùchán's famous quote about the practitioners of the Yoga 瑜伽 school, where this deity forms one member of a quartet of similarly named figures.[117] Though "Jiāluó" is unmistakably a Tantric and Indic name, without an unambiguous precursor in sources of Esoteric Buddhism, these spirits may have acquired their names through much the same process of "popularization" that shaped the Three Altars tradition.[118] Their importance in Ritual Master ceremony is noteworthy, where they appear in a handful of other invocations.[119]

八萬四千大金剛 84-thousand great Vajra-protectors: standard protector-spirits associated with Tantric Esoteric Buddhism, here more of a general indicator of vast spirit armies rather than a specific, cultic organization of spirit-soldiers like the Five Camps, though the numeric symbolism may have its own background.

普唵祖師 Ancestral Master Pǔ-ān , the deified Sòng monk who is rivaled only by the Three Matrons 三奶 as the most universal patron-saint among Tantric-Popular traditions of Ritual Method. The way his name is conjoined with the command of collective

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[114] Guān is generally titled Prime Marshal in Daoist sources, while his temples tended to call him King Guān 關王. On the former examples are numerous, e.g. DFHY 36, 259-260, FHYZ 39 ; 太上三洞神呪 j.5 , 祈禳驅治諸呪, 召關元帥呪; and 無上黃籙大齋立成儀 j.52, 神位門, 左二班, where he is placed with the other major Prime Marshals and Ritual Method deities in this text's grand inclusive pantheon. For King Guān 關王 see 續道藏, 岱史 j. 9, 靈宇紀, 八三之二, 關王廟; 續道藏, 諸神聖誕日玉匣記等集, 諸神聖誕令節日期;

[115] See 清史稿，志 凡一百三十五卷，卷八十四 志五十九，禮三 吉禮三，關聖帝君.Scripta Sinica.

[116] Such as DFHY 146, and DFHY 88.

[117] 海瓊白真人語錄，ZHDZ 19:549.

[118] As these deities are featured in the Root Altar invocation, I reexamine these symbols there.

[119] Aside from the United Altar, CXT 22 本壇大將，CXT 60 徐甲眞人 (2)：伽羅弟子神通力，步罡踏斗到壇前；CXT 153 法天張聖者；左右伽羅馬官將，前後馬虎二位尊； 167 馬虎大雷將, 172 虎枷大雷神.

summons and the end appears to raise Ancestral Master Pǔ-ān to a position of leadership or primacy relative to the pantheon.[120]

祝門弟子焚香請 "Disciples of the school of blessing burn incense and summon": This penultimate couplet formula of summons appears only here, in CXT and certain Ānpíng sources, but not in CXT. As the phrasing of this couplet is routinely used as a kind of marker distinguishing particular lineage or altar-groups, this would appear to preserve the conventions of an earlier tradition.

Additional Buddhist and Tantric symbols in the "Long Version"

普猛將軍大菩薩 A "bodhisattva-general" named Pǔ-méng, of uncertain identity.

三界張公下玄壇 This 張公 would appear to signify Lord-of-the-Rite Zhāng, though the the Dark Altar" 玄壇 reference calls to mind Prime Marshal Zhào 趙, normally identified with this phrase. This ambiguity is strengthened by the fact as 張 and 趙 are essentially Mínnán homophones (張 Diōh̍; 趙 Diūh̍).

觀音 The Bodhisattva Guānyīn, the most widely worshipped deities in all of Chinese religion, and who is almost always invoked in every standard Minor Rite performance by her own independent invocation.

泗州佛祖 Buddha-ancestor Sì-zhōu, the deified monk Sēng-qié 僧伽 (717-710), widely invoked and worshipped in southeastern China.

清水[祖師] Ancestral Master Clearwater, the deified monk Chén Pǔ-zú 陳普足 (1045-1101), whose major cult is based in Ān-xī 安溪 County (Quánzhōu), and who has become an important Ancestral Master of the Táinán-area Minor Rite.

金光[金剛]六天王 A general reference to Vajra-beings 金剛 and celestial Buddhist deities of the Six Heavens (of the realm of desire 六欲天), possibly conflated with the ancient Daoist nemeses-turned subordinates, the Demon Kings of the Six Heavens 六天魔王.

香山雪山二大聖 Incense Mountain and Snowy Mountain, two Buddhist deities mentioned by Bái Yùchán in his discourse on the Yoga 瑜伽 practitioners he observed;[121] Snowy Mountain has become a figure in the Minor Rite and Lǘshān systems associated with the power of cold to reduce fevers and render the Ritual Master impervious to fire, as when performing feats involving boiling oil or fire-walking.

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[120] Importantly, by his prominent invocation in the United Altar, every Táinán-area Minor Rite ceremony features the invocation of Pǔ-ān regardless of lineage-group (pài 派) affiliation, thus showing once again how claims of lineage-group affiliation are insufficient for understanding a tradition's symbolic content, or classifying them relative to other altar-lineages.

[121] See Davis *Society and the Supernatural*, 130-131.

金珠銀朱二珠郎	Two "Pearl Lads" Golden Pearl and Silver [Pearl]: unknown subordinates, likely a pair attached to another deity.
哪吒	Nézhà, the Third Prince.
虎伽羅	Hǔ-jiāluó, the aforementioned Tantric-derived deity or symbol.
三世諸佛	"All the Buddhas of the Three Realms," a general reference which suggests an overtly Buddhist liturgical framework.

The "long version" presents a more extensive and almost exclusively Buddhist pantheon, in which we find several parallels with the Yoga 瑜伽 altar-pantheon outlined by Bái Yùchán.[122] Aside from the Jīn-ān Gōng transmission-branch, most altars primarily use not this longer text but rather the first version (HST 1:2, CXT 11). By its primacy in ritual and common use throughout different tradition-groups, this stanza represents the most fundamental of all Táinán-area Minor Rite invocations, and appears at or near the beginning of every standard ritual performance.

This shorter "standard" version presents a compact pantheon of mostly Tantric and Buddhist deities, together with the ancient Daoist Six Dīng and Six Jiǎ spirits, who in temple culture are always understood to be two deities,[123] as well as the major demonifuge Guān-gōng 關公, here called Prime Marshal 元帥, King 王, and Grand General 大將軍. These older titles of Prime Marshal and King prevailed in Daoist texts and the names of temples through the Míng, but were superseded in the Qīng by Lord Guān's elevation to the status of Grand Emperor 大帝 (or, Holy Imperial Lord Guān 關聖帝君). Thus, the preservation of these older titles here would suggest this is Míng text, or based on a Míng precursor. Moreover, as status-conscious temple communities are typically eager to claim

[122] Cited in a note above; also see Hsieh 《道密法圓》, 16-25.
[123] This pair of Six Dīng and Six Jiǎ 六丁六甲 (liok dinnĝ, liok gă) are often represented by two spirit-image "heads", especially the kind attached to spirit-sedans.

elevated positions or titles for their gods and temple buildings (calling a small hall 堂 size shrine a "palace" 宮, and so on), the retention of these earlier conventions is likewise testifies to a certain reverential conservatism on the part of Ritual Masters who conscientiously preserved this efficacious and authoritative text as it was handed down through the tradition.

Of primary importance here is the Three Altars triad, which forms both the apex and nearly half of the pantheon itself. Thus, by primacy and proportion, this most universal of invocations emphasizes the Three Altars gods more prominently than in longer invocations, where they head a larger subordinate pantheon. In other liturgical settings, the Three Altars template functions as a core organizing symbol which Daoist, Ritual Master, and temple deities into an integrated liturgical structure, in which the Central Altar at the middle of this synthesis is identified with the altar-table and gods of the temple itself.

The Prime Marshal of the Central Altar 中壇元帥

In the greater Taiwanese and Mínnán littoral regions, leadership of the Five Camps had by the very late Míng or early Qīng become assigned to the group of deified Ritual Masters known collectively as the Four Saints: Zhāng, Xiāo, Liú, and Lían 張蕭劉連, with the Third Prince Nézhà 哪吒三太子 as the general, or Prime Marshal of the Central Camp. The prevailing association of these five figures with the Five Camps does not appear to extend much beyond the Mínnán littoral, though the precise extent of this arrangement has not been clearly established. Whatever the case, all of these deities had

well-established cults long before their identification of the Five Camps, with the Four Saints themselves worshipped in various combinations as Lords-of-the-Rite 法主公 across much of Fújiàn, while the specific grouping of these four as the Four Saints had already become established by the late Míng, where they are named as a group of subordinates attached to Chén Jìnggū in the *Sānjiào Sǒushén Dàquán*.[124] However, I find no evidence for specific association among these four and the Third Prince until their assignment to the Five Camps, a development likely dating to the early Qīng or late Míng at the earliest.

In his 2003 article on the Five Camps and the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar, Professor Lǐ Fēngmào first presents the early history of the proto-Five Camps symbols in Zhèngyī registers and Externalization of Officials 出官 techniques,[125] and then proceeds to advance a theory which seeks to explain how the Third Prince came to be the general of the fifth and Central Camp as the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar 中壇元帥.

In Professor Lǐ's study, this connection begins with the Táng-era worship of Nézhā's father Píshāmén 毘沙門 (Vaiśravaṇa), one of the directional protector spirits of Buddhism known as the Four Great Celestial Kings. 四大天王.[126] As the protector of the north, the traditional source of malevolent influences in Chinese cosmology, worship of Píshāmén was officially promoted by Táng Xuánzōng 唐玄宗 after 742, when the Buddhist monk Bù Kōng 不空(Amoghavajra, 705-774) credited the god for bringing spirit-soldiers that helped relieve the capitol of Cháng-ān from siege.[127] Professor Lǐ cites

[124] See the translation of "Madame Big Breasts"大奶夫人 in the discussion of prototypical Ritual Masters.
[125] I discuss these aspects of Lǐ Fēngmào's (2003) article elsewhere in an examination of the Five Camps.
[126] See DDB, 四天王.
[127] See 毘沙門儀軌 (T. 21.1249).

writings of the 10th C. monk and Buddhist historian Zànníng 贊寧 that state Xuánzōng then ordered all military governors to install and revere images of Píshāmén in a northwestern corner of a monastery or official compound.[128] The same Táng-era texts by Bù Kōng also feature Píshāmén's sons, especially the Third Prince Nuózhà, who is depicted as a fierce protector "holding a halberd" 手捧戟, and who declares in a brief monologue that

> I protect the Buddha-dharma and seek to seize evil men or those who give rise to unwholesome thoughts. Night and day, I protect the king, grand ministers and all the hundred officials. [I] slay and smite all those [evildoers] I encounter, and all their kind. I, Nézhà, use my Vajra-staff to pierce their eyes and their hearts. If there are those who gives rise to evil intent and wish to slay or harm Bhikkus, Bhikkunis, or lay believers, then I will use my Vajra-staff to smite their heads."
> 我護持佛法。欲 攝縛惡人或起不善之心。我晝夜守護國王大臣及百官僚。相與殺害打陵。如是之輩者 。我等那吒以金剛杖刺其眼及其心。若為比丘比丘尼優婆塞優婆夷起不善心及殺害心 者。亦以金剛捧打其頭.[129]

The Third Prince is thus depicted as a particularly fierce dharma-protector, whose persona is wholly defined by his eagerness to inflict graphic violence on evildoers and enemies of the Buddhadharma. This whole episode serves to illustrate how Buddhism gained much of its relevance through providing the state with a kind of spiritualized military assistance and ritual power. Such examples serve to remind how the apex of Buddhist influence during the Táng and Sòng had far more to do with what amounts to ritual magic, as well as its

[128] Lǐ Fēngmào,「五營信仰與中壇元帥：其原始及衍變」，在於《第一屆哪吒學術研討會論文集》，國立中山大學文學院清代學術研究中心，新營太子宮管理委員會，主編 (臺北市：新文豐出版，民 92 [2003]): 569.
[129]《北方毘沙門天王隨軍護法儀軌》T.21.1247. Lǐ mentions but does not quote this text (「五營信仰與中壇元帥」, 569).

dimensions of engagement with the Common Religion of the era, than the aspects of doctrine and literary production that scholarship of Buddhism typically emphasizes to the total neglect of ritual and popular culture.[130] Overwhelmingly, most deified Buddhist masters of this Táng-Sòng period, who form a major component of Mínnán Common Religion and the Minor Rite pantheon, are worshipped for their demonifugic powers or successful weather ritual, and not as paragons of contemplative serenity. Likewise, most of the Tantric deities and symbols which took root in Chinese (and Japanese) religion were fierce martial spirits like the Four Heavenly Kings, the Five Great Luminous Kings 五大明王, and the Third Prince Nézhà.

Through the Táng, however, the Third Prince was primarily associated with the more important cult of his father Píshāmén, and during the Sòng worship of Píshāmén as protector of the north or northwest continued, as cities and temple compounds often featured Pavilions of the Celestial King 天王樓 in their north or northwestern corners.[131] According to the pioneering Japanese historian Miyazaki Ichisada, from the Sòng onward, however, the importance of Xuántiān Shàngdì as a protector of the north came to eclipse

[130] Moreover, it is worth observing that the much celebrated literary and contemplative elements of Chinese Buddhism, positioned monastic Buddhism to form an important and enduring element of elite culture, but it was Buddhism's ritual and popular dimensions which attracted political support and religious relevance in local society. The so-called decline of Buddhism, which involved an institutional contraction after the Yuán, also coincided with a relative decline of these ritual and popular aspects of Buddhism's social profile, and a relative contraction of Buddhism into a more segmented cultural zone. Though I cannot explore this topic here, it seems likely that among the complex factors that influenced the institutional contraction of Buddhism after the Sòng, it was not simply the aggressive seizure of monastic landholdings by clan organizations that propelled this relative contraction, but also the diminished relevance of Buddhism in the non-funerary ritual marketplace, which had come to be dominated by Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters and Daoists, all practicing forms of ritual more specifically oriented toward local cults and temple networks than were ritual programs practiced in the majority of late imperial monastic Buddhist institutions.

[131] Lǐ,「五營信仰與中壇元帥」, 570.

the cult of Píshāmén in society, and Lǐ argues that the ensuing decline of Píshāmén's cult led to the conditions whereby the Third Prince would come to occupy the central of the Five Camps.[132]

Professor Lǐ argues that during the Míng, as Píshāmen's cult grew less popular, his role of spatial protector came to be transferred to his son the Third Prince, a process which, according to Lǐ, also involved the historic conflation of the ancient proto-Five Camps attested by early Zhèngyī texts, and these Four Celestial Kings. In this proposed series of conflations, Lǐ argues that the Third Price became associated with the central camp.[133] Lǐ's speculative argument rests on several assumptions: first that these Four Celestial Kings had become adopted into the ritual domain of local cults as spatial protector deities, and second, by virtue of Píshāmén's role in this scheme, his son the Third Prince was somehow selected to play the role of not the northern sector associated with his father, but with the central camp. Lǐ provides no evidence for any of these conflationary steps in his thesis, but rather speculates that a series of changes precipitated the migration of the Third Prince from his father Píshāmen's association with the north in monastic Buddhist settings, to the center of the Five Camps in a Lǘshān context. The first step in this speculative process arose, Lǐ argues, from the decline of Píshāmen's cult:

> In this way, in the Míng period when Píshāmen belief had passed from vigor to decline, we can surmise that the Five Camps belief of Fúzhōu-region

[132] Ibid., 567. Importantly, it was Miyazaki's study which first established the Tantric milieu of Nuózhà and these other Buddhist protector deities. See 宮崎市定，「毘沙門天信仰の東漸に就て」，《紀元二千六百年記念史学論文集》，京都：帝國大學文學部史學部編，1941.4，收於《亞細亞史研究》.

[133] Lǐ,「五營信仰與中壇元帥」, 568 ff.

> Lűshān lineage groups took this opportunity [of the decline of Píshāmen's cult] and absorbed Nézhà.[134]
> 如此毘沙門天王信仰從盛而衰的明代時期，正可側面理解福州一帶閭山派的五營信仰趁此而吸納哪吒。

This interpretation appears to rest on the assumption that a declining monastic cult of Píshāmén somehow rendered Nézhà available for adoption by Lűshān Ritual Masters, as if a weakened monastic monopoly over this symbol meant there was no institution to guard his intellectual property, as it were, or at least dominate his cultic associations. As Lǐ quotes passages from Hóng Mài which reference Nézhà's Fireball Invocation, in which Nézhà is already invoked by (non-monastic) Ritual Masters, the need to envision such a historical process is rather strange, and most likely reflects the way in which traditional scholars have tended to regard named traditions (Buddhism, Daoism, etc) and lineage-groups 派 as impermeable and autonomous entities, and that any signs of symbolic transfer or "syncretism" indicate conditions of decline and decadence. Whatever the case, Lǐ further advances his speculative theory on the basis of popular fiction and a literary motif in which "the son replaces the father":

> With contemporary popular fiction and popular worship of saints as truly the main catalyzing force, and newly created mythology of the Five Camps generals already flourishing, from the gradually declining belief in Píshāmén, Nézhà, or Né[zhà] ritual and the Nézhà [Fireball] Invocation were transformed and given a new status, preserving his dharma-protector image and officially entering him into local ritual lineages, [while] in the Fúzhōu region, there appeared the phenomenon of the son replacing his father's position, and by means of passing through Ritual Teaching 法教 [he] took possession of his [father's] dharma-protecting capacity. In this manner, the spiritually mighty Nézhà of Ritual [Teaching] lineages combined the rebellious image of the teaching of popular fiction 小說教, [while] the populace believed in his unique spiritual powers of exorcism, [Nézhà] was

[134] Ibid., 589.

> able to turn and accept his father Heavenly King Píshāmén's position as dharma-protector, and so the son replacing the father's position is exactly the form of dharma protector whereby the prime marshal of the central camp 中營元帥 was passed along.[135]
> 當時通俗小說與民間聖者的崇拜實為主催之力，新創造的五營將神話既已盛行，漸形沒落的毘沙門天信仰即借由哪吒或[哪]吒法，哪吒咒而轉化為新出的地位，保存其護法形象而正式進入地方法派，在福州一帶出現了子代父職的現象，而繼續在民間通行的法教中擁有其護法職能。如此從法派中的靈威哪吒結合了小說教的叛逆形象，民眾相信其特具驅邪逐祟的靈力，故能轉而接其父毘沙門天王的護法之職，如此子代父職正是中營元帥所傳續的護法形象。

There are more issues in this passage than can be taken up here, among them the traditional but dubious assumption that popular literature (and not specifically dramatic performance in Lǐ's estimation) influenced ritual, rather than the other way around.[136] Moreover, his entire, multi-stage argument ultimately hinges on this motif of the rebellious son replacing the father. If this were the case, then one might expect some symbolic traces or markers of such an influential factor in the resultant situation, but in fact we do not see any such references to a rebellious Nézhà replacing his father in any of the liturgical materials in which he is invoked and depicted as the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar. Given the tenuousness of this unsupported speculation, even before examining other evidence, readers would be justified in finding this whole argument and the other leaps of speculation presented here unconvincing.

In its basic outline, what Lǐ has attempted is to take two points: the late imperial Mínnán/Taiwanese association of the Third Prince with the central of the Five Camps (the Four Saints have been omitted from his analysis), and the cult of Píshāmén, with his

[135] Ibid.
[136] See Meulenbeld, *Civilized Demons.*

position among the Four Heavenly Kings, and then search for historical and cultural developments which might somehow connect these two points. Considering the entirely speculative and tenuous nature of Lǐ's argument, the manifold evidentiary and methodological problems raised in this attempt to link these two points further suggest that connecting these two ends of a historical process is an unconstructive and indeed irrelevant premise in the first place.

Furthermore, Lǐ is inclined to search for a connection between the Four Celestial Kings and local protector cults because "during the Táng and Sòng, belief in the generals of the five directions and their commanding generals and officials did not continue to develop, but instead only became preserved within part of the Daoist Huáng Lù ritual as an Externalization of Officials [technique]." But as I have shown in my discussion of certain Sòng memorials, in major works of Sòng-era Daoism we find a reworking of early Zhèngyī symbolism concerning protection against plague, protection of local precincts, and cooperation between the proto-Five Camps and local deities normally beneath and beyond traditional Daoist pantheons. Lǐ does not cite or discuss the medieval and Sòng texts I have presented elsewhere concerned with protection against plague and other specific maladies, like tigers and curses, in which these proto-Five Camps symbols appear. Thus, while the directional nature of the Four Celestial Kings offers a suggestive parallel to the Five Camps, Professor Lǐ's speculative arguments necessitate a series of historic conflations and innovations that are simply not necessary to explain how the Third Prince Nézhà came to be the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar, and also came to be associated with the central of the Five Camps, two developments which all scholars and popular

commentators have always assumed to be one and the same, but which I believe the evidence clearly shows we must dissociate to arrive at a satisfactory explanation.

If we suspend fixation on the Five Camps as the focus of inquiry, and examine the available evidence from Fujianese and Taiwanese liturgical texts, then we find a much simpler and more convincing scenario which can explain how the Third Prince became the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar. First let us recall that by the Sòng, Hóng Mài reports that lay ritual experts I would describe as Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters were wielding a ritual method called Nézhà's Fire-ball 哪吒火球,[137] and that this one ritual method associated with the Third Prince Nézhà formed one of several, primarily Tantric methods connected with a particular patron spirit or Ancestral Master, such as the deified Nāgārjuna (Liong-čhiew Ong) 龍樹王, Vajra Huì-ji 穢跡金剛, and methods associated with Xuántiān Shàngdì among others.[138]

Furthermore, by the Southern Sòng, these Tantric and Daoist deities were increasingly brought together into composite pantheons –altar arrangements that joined different Ancestral Masters, subordinate pantheons, and their associated rites into comprehensive meta-traditions. This agglutinizing developmental tendency is a major characteristic of the entire Ritual Method movement, and is already visible in the composite pantheon which Bái Yùchán described the Wū of his day as invoking, and which Davis interprets as "the distillation of several independent cults into a unique configuration of fierce bodhisattvas, guardian deities, and converted demons."[139] The fact that these

[137] See Davis, *Society and the Supernatural,* 48.
[138] Davis, *Society and the Supernatural,* 149.
[139] Ibid., 131.

Ritual Master traditions were assembling flexible altar-pantheons from among these particular spirits is made all the more evident when we examine various Lűshān and Minor Rite liturgical texts, where many of these same deities is consistently invoked, but often in different arrangements.

In Jiànyáng 建陽, Yè Míngshēng finds that among the many symbols and pantheons of Lűshān ritual systems is a core altar arrangement, depicted in both liturgical texts and ritual scroll paintings called the Three Altars 三壇, the term Davis has shown to be derived from the Táng-Sòng era Tantric school of practice, and which is widely used in Taiwanese Minor Rite texts to denote the both the tradition itself and the person of the Ritual Master. In its classic form as found in Jiànyáng, the eponymous Three Altars are – like all altar systems– fundamentally spatial, with the "Lords of the Three Altars Teaching" 三壇教主 being "Lóngshù Wáng (Nāgārjuna) of the Right Altar, the True Warrior (Zhēnwǔ) of the Left Altar, and Vajra Huìjī of the Central Altar 左壇龍樹王，右壇真武，中壇穢跡金."[140]

These three deities arranged in this order constitute the Three Altars pantheon, which despite orthographic concealment and the lapse of knowledge among practitioners is still prominently featured in Táinán-area traditions, where this (disguised) original line-up remains in use, side by side with later modifications of the central altar position. This more "original" Three Altars pantheon appears numerous times in Jiànyáng-area liturgical

[140] Yè Míngshēng 葉明生,「試論"瑜伽教"之演變及其世俗化事像」,《佛教研究》第 8 期(1999). I have consulted a digitized version available (in two parts) at: http://blog.xuite.net/linmengi08/twblog/127819075-試論"瑜伽教"之衍變及其世俗化事象（一）【葉明生】, and http://blog.xuite.net/linmengi08/twblog/127819070-試論"瑜伽教"之衍變及其世俗化事象（二）【葉明生】(ret. Jan 2017).

texts, where in most cases these deities are named for their positions in the left, right, and central altars. For example, in the *Greeting Armies, Complete Volume* 接軍全本, the text of a large-scale community rite, the invitation of spirits begins by summoning the "Lűshān High Saints and Ritual [Method] Spirits of the Three Altars" 閭山三壇上聖法神 and starting with "The Three Pure Ones, Grand Emperors" 三清大帝 then summons a series of well-known Lűshān Ancestral Masters and other notable deities in three groups, where in the third group we find "Left altar, Commander of Troops Nāgārjuna, Right Altar Controller of Troops Zhēnwǔ, Central Altar Vajra Huìjī" 左壇統兵龍瑞王，右壇押兵真武，中壇威跡金剛 (sic).[141]

A highly similar pantheon is presented in another Jiànyáng-area manuscript, the *Complete Book of Documents* 文書全本, where the relevant section again begins by announcing invocation of the "Lűshān School High Saints of the Three Altars" 閭山三門下壇上聖, and then after a descending series of major Lűshān deities, in roughly the middle of this particular invocation passage the text names "Left Altar, Commander of Troops, Nāgārjuna, Right Altar, Guardian of Heaven General Zhēnwǔ, Central Altar, King Vajra Huìjī 左壇統兵龍瑞王，右壇鎮天真武將，中壇威跡金剛王.[142] Elsewhere in the *Book of Memorials and Writs of Pardon* 表辰奏赦本, these three are again invoked in the same order, though bereft of their left, right, and central designations.[143] In terms of iconographic

[141] *Jiànyáng* 504; discussion of this text and extended pantheon on 58.
[142] *Jiànyáng* 448. This orthography for Huìjī 穢跡 as 威跡 is consistent throughout these Jiànyáng sources.
[143] *Jiànyáng* 674.

representation, two different altar-scrolls are presented in the Jiànyáng volume which depict this trio.[144]

Another Jiànyáng-area Lűshān text, the *Niángniáng Yèyóu Gōng Fǎshū* 娘娘夜遊宮法書 (*Ritual Book of the Lady Journeying the Palaces by Night*) shows one way in which this spatially-articulated Three Altars pantheon was applied in healing ritual.[145] Like all Ritual Master ceremony, this remarkably imaginative rite is essentially a military operation, with extensive invocation of armies of the Five Camps (both inner and outer), along with a classic Lűshān pantheon, and featuring a series of progressive ritual transformations which first command that the entranceway of the patient's home turn into "the Grand Palace of Nāgārjuna," while the family members transform into "dragon lords" and "dragon mothers." The patient's house and environs are all progressively transformed into a Lűshān cosmos, guarded by a host of deities and spirit armies repeatedly associated with the deified Nāgārjuna,[146] so that ultimately "the sick man transforms into a Real Man" 病人化為真人, and pathogenic agents are driven from the patient's body.[147]

While the liturgy goes on to offer a spectacular series of imaginative transformations and exorcistic military metaphors, in the opening portions of the rite, the Ritual Master secures the home by first deploying armies of the Five Camps (evidently by use of mudras),

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[144] *Jiànyáng* 400 (圖六一) and 402(圖六六).
[145] Yè, *Jiànyáng* 851-861. The text is dated 大清光緒丙戌年(1886). The text is written in such a way that instructions and liturgy are at times difficult to distinguish. Nevertheless, this particular text is among a handful of the most remarkable and evocative liturgical texts in any of the volumes published by Yè and Lagerwey.
[146] The deified Nāgārjua, aka Lóngshù Wáng 龍樹王(King Dragon-tree) here, like in many Fujianese texts, is written Lóngruì Wáng 龍瑞王 (Min. l̍iong s̆uee onǵ).
[147] *Jiànyáng* p.853.

after which the liturgy states "Nāgārjuna 龍瑞王 bars the front door, Grand General Zhēnwǔ 真武大將軍 bars the rear door, Vajra Huìjī 威跡金剛 bars the central door."[148] Thus in certain applications, this basic Three Altars pantheon is employed as a functional paradigm of spatial protection. Moreover, in this same text the trio is explicityly referred to as the Three Altars, where instructions specify that "when the Ritual Master enters the [patient's] room, use mudras of the Three Altars left and right generals to bar the door" 師入房用捻三壇左右將把門.[149]

In his 1999 article discussing the popularization of Yoga 瑜伽 from the Sòng onward, Yè also cites a passage of the Lűshān liturgy from Xiàpǔ County 霞浦縣 (north of Fúzhōu) used by Ritual Masters of the Shē minority 畲族, in which they invoke "King Lóngshù of the Left Altar, King Zhēnwǔ of the Right Altar, King Sìzhōu (another deified Buddhist monk often seen in Lűshān liturgies) of the Outer Altar, King Spirit Mountain Shìjiā (Śakya) of the Central Altar, King Guānyīn of the Inner Altar, [may] these five kings come and protect [the altar-space] 左壇龍樹王，右壇真武王，外壇泗州王，中壇靈山釋迦王，內壇觀音王等五王來鎮守."[150]

In this expanded arrangement, the position of the central altar is assigned to a Spirit Mountain King Shìjiā, an interpretation of the Śakyamuni Buddha connected here with the symbol of Spirit Mountain 靈山,[151] but primarily meant to indicate the Buddha's

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[148] *Jiànyáng* p.852.
[149] *Jiànyáng* p.853
[150] Yè, 「試論"瑜伽教"」, section 3 「閭山夫人教之畲緒」, end. The liturgy in question is called "The Milk-maid Paces the Mainstay-dance,"奶娘行罡舞, a reference to Chén Jìng-gū.
[151] The three "mountain" traditions of Lűshān 閭山, Língshān ("Spirit Mountain) 靈山, and Héngshān 橫山 constitute three ritual traditions also mentioned by Bái Yùchán (ZHDZ 19:548) which late

transformation into Vajra Huìjī to subdue the "Conch-topknot Brahma King" in Buddhist scripture.[152] We find a similar configuration of this trio in the highly Buddhistic Lűshān texts of the Lìyuán tradition in neighboring Shòuníng County, north of Fúzhōu, where in one manuscript, Lóngshù (Nāgārjuna), Zhēnwǔ, and Shìjiā are placed in left, right, and central "Yāméns" 左衙, 右衙, 中衙 respectively, while in another Lìyuán manuscript these same three are again depicted in left, right, and central altars.[153] Elsewhere in this same Lìyuán collection, invocations for Vajra Huìjī, used to commence ritual with acts of purification, make explicit the connection between Shìjiā and Huìjī.[154]

Hence despite the name change, in the configurations employed by Shē minority Lűshān Ritual Masters in Xiàpǔ County and those of nearby Shòuníng, the central altar position is still symbolically linked to Vajra Huìjī by identification with his alter-ego or higher manifestation, the Śakyamuni Buddha himself. Here we again see how the specific spirits of the classic Three Altars pantheon and its tri-partite spatial structure form consistent but adaptable elements in Lűshān ritual systems, in which the central position is subject to some symbolic modification, however subtle in these particular cases.

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imperial and modern Ritual Masters envision as linked around the central symbol of Lűshān. See Lagerwey 1994, 2001.

[152] Bái Yùchán relates this background in his famous passage on the Yoga School:釋迦化為穢跡金剛, 以降螺髻梵王. ZHDZ 19:549.

[153] *Lìyuán* 659, 709.

[154] From 三界結界科(*Lìyuán* 472-3; a similar invocation appears in the opening of a different rite, the 老君政教粧樓 479), in formula for purifying the altar-space:

仰請金剛大穢跡　　手持寶杵除邪魔
足踏火輪焰連天　　結印當胸咒法水
南無[法佛僧]南無本師釋迦牟尼佛，化身穢跡大金剛
神通顯現降邪魔　　助吾盂中咒法水...

Two important texts of Lűshān Wánglǎo School 王姥教 in Lóngyán offer yet another variation on this same Three Altars arrangement. The *Dàxiāng Gòng Yī Zōng* 大香供一宗 and *Xiǎoxiāng Gòng Yī Zōng* 大香供一宗 (*Grand Offering of Incense* and *Minor Offering of Incense*) both present definitive and encyclopedic Lűshān invocation sequences, structured within enumerated verses of sounding the horn.[155] The *Grand Offering of Incense* commences with invocation of Emissaries of the Three Realms 三界 and follows with ancient Wū-ist deities (閭山九郎...橫山七郎，茆山十郎 ...張趙先師... 趙候三郎驅五瘟)[156] and a long invocation of military emissaries, officials, and generals, including the Five Furies (who "repel the wild tiger" 五猖將軍驅猛虎), as well as the language of religious violence so emblematic of the Ritual Method movement, exemplified here by "King Long-Sands, Smasher of the Five [Powers] Temple 長沙王破五廟 (159).

Then after making purifications of space by water, the liturgy reveal this to be a healing rite of "Entering the [Patient's Sick] Room" 入房, which understandably involves invocation of many five-directional spirits of purification, including directional "Destroyers of Filth" 「五方」破穢穢直金剛[sic.], evidently a development of Huìjī as a pentadic symbol of spatial purification. After diagnosing the patient's illness according to the time-symbols of its onset, the liturgy employs a new enumerated sequence, here a metaphor of purification, saying "one bout of strong wind, one bout of rain, fine rain of the high mountain, let it fall in a slight mist 一陣強風，一陣雨，高山細雨落微微, after which sets of Lűshān gods are called to "descend and swiftly take [the pathogenic entity] away 下

[155] 一聲鳴角勝紛紛，天門地戶一齊開... *Guǎngjì Tán* 2:157.
[156] *Guǎngjì Tán* 2:158.

來速退! And so the illness is sent down to the next gate 關, where the formula repeats. Different groups and arrangements of Lűshān deities appear in each verse, and after the fourth bout of strong wind, the patient's affliction is sent down to a gate watched by The Spirit Mountain Buddha of the Three Worlds 靈山三世佛 and Śakyamuni Buddha 釋迦摩尼佛.

These two Buddhas, reminiscent of those seen in northern Fújiàn above, are further accompanied by "King Lóngshù of the Left Altar, Emperor Zhēnwǔ of the Right Altar, and Prince Nézhà of the Central Altar 左壇龍樹王，右壇真武帝，中壇哪吒太子," whom the Ritual Master commands to descend, and together with "all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas," again send away the spiritual pathogen.[157] Thus we find in this liturgy of southwestern Fújiàn the displacement of Huìjī from the central altar, and his replacement with the Third Prince Nézhà. In the process, the Central Altar itself has now become part the deity's name.

Continuing in this same *Great Offering of Incense*, after several ritual transformations ("if women recite the Guānyīn Invocation, let the blood-pan transform into the While Lotus Pond 女人念得觀音咒") and final purifications, another numbered sequence begins ("one sound of the horn, rising resounding," probably a separate stage of ritual), and following another classic inventory of Lűshān deities, the liturgy features a Lűshan-themed Transformation of the Body technique, employing truly vernacular renditions of classic Daoist language (弟郎不是凡間子，正是閭山學法郎...) in which

[157] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 大香供一宗(召兵), 2:161: 靈山三世佛，釋迦摩尼佛，左壇龍樹王，右壇真武帝，中壇哪吒太子，諸佛菩薩下來速退。

the Ritual Master becomes liturgically identified with Wánglǎo, the Ancestral Matron of this school.[158] Next scores more definitive Lűshān gods are invoked, including spirits of Yoga, Marshal Zhào, Bǎoshēng Dàdì (aka the Real Man Wú 吳真人), and even the same phrase Hastening Official, Xǔ Xùn 推官許遜 found in the Chéngxīn Tán folio (CXT166), plus a series of ancient Wū and Tantric deities such as Pǎngǔ 盤古, the Ā-Xiūluó King 阿修羅王, and the Saint, Monk Snowy Mountain 雪山和尚聖者 among others.

Again with the fourth sound of the horn, the liturgy repeats the same sequence of these (largely) Buddhist symbols of the Three Altars, beginning with the Spirit Mountain Buddha of the Three Worlds 靈山三世佛, and ending with Prince Nézhà of the Central Altar, flanked by Zhēnwǔ and Lóngshù Wáng.[159]

The next liturgy in the Guǎngjì Tán collection, the *Xiǎo Xiāng Gòng Yī Zōng* 小香供一宗, presents a similarly iconic inventory of Lűshān deities, though in a different and more compact arrangement. After several stages of invocation –and casting the divination blocks to determine the arrival of the spirits, following yet another invocation of the On-duty Talisman Spirits of the Three Realms and other emissaries, the liturgy again invokes the same sequence of the Spirit Mountain Buddha, Śakyamuni Buddha, and to the Three Altars trio of Nāgārjuna, Zhēnwǔ, and Prince Nézhà of the Central Altar, who this time immediately followed by Vajra Huìjī 穢跡金剛, suggesting a textual snapshot of this latter figure's displacement from the central altar position by the preceding figure of Nézhà.

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[158] *Guǎngjì Tán* 2:165.

[159] *Guǎngjì Tán* 2:166. Amid the many familiar and ancient symbols invoked here, there are also references to Bǎo Shēng Dàdì as the Real Man Wú, and associated with Báijiāo 白礁 (here said to be part of Zhāngzhōu). This encyclopedic, repetitive, and non-hierarchical invocation ends with a line prayerfully requesting the removal of calamity and adversity from a client on 170.

These two major healing rites offer extremely rich and encyclopedic inventories of the deities and symbols most representative of the broader Lűshān Ritual Master tradition, from the Emissaries of the Three Realms to the Ancestral and Root Masters 祖本師, many ancient Wū deities, the Five Camps, Marshal Zhào, and these core deities of the Three Altars, but with Prince Nézhà now synonymous with his placement in the Central Altar of this Three Altars pantheon.

In all of these same sources, from Jiànyáng and Shòuníng in the north to Lóngyán in southwestern Fújiàn, the Five Camps 五營 are frequently invoked, but never are the Five Camps connected with any of the Four Saints 四聖者(張蕭劉連, who do not appear in these particular sources) or with Prince Nézhà. Where he is called Prince Nézhà of the Central Altar, this is always in direct and unambiguous reference to the central of the Three Altars, and there is no association between the Third Prince and the Five Camps whatsoever. These sources therefore demonstrate that Nézhà was given his eponymous association with the Central Altar in these Lűshān adaptations of the Three Altars, and that this central placement is not based on any association with the Five Camps, which must have been a later development, and linked also with the assignment of the Four Saints to the Five Camps, developments which appear limited to certain areas of southern Fújiàn.

This same Three Altars arrangement is prominently featured in a Qīng era manuscript entitled "Yújiā Secret [Rite] for Talisman Water" 瑜伽符水秘密 obtained by the avid collector, Daoist priest and Ritual Master Lín Méngyì 林孟毅.[160] In the opening

[160] 瑜伽符水秘密, published in 《道法探索—道士手抄本彙編》, (2019 年八月刊), 1-22.

lines of this rite, the liturgy announces invocation of deities organized under the "Three Altars and Six Offices," among other titles, and after naming a group of highly local Ancestral Masters and symbols connected with Spirit-mediums (銅馬三朗[161]), next to be summoned are "Lord-of-the-Rite of the Left Altar Medicine King Lóngshù, Zhēnwǔ, Xuántiān Shàngdì of the Right Altar, Commander of Soldiers of the Central Altar, the Third [Prince] Prime Marshal Nézhà" 左壇法主龍樹醫王，右壇真武玄天上帝，中壇統兵哪吒三大元帥.

In the Taiwanese tradition, the Five Camps are (with but rare exeptions[162]) universally identified with the Four Saints at the compass points and the Third Prince in the center. These associations have given rise to the similarly universal assumption that the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar is so named for this assignment to the central camp, an assumption which the evidence presented above conclusively disproves. However, even in the Taiwanese sources, further proof showing the Third Prince to be Prime Marshal of the Central of the Three Altars has, like the Three Altars pantheon itself, been hiding in plain sight, in the Táinán-area Minor Rite. Moreover, the context in which the Third Prince appears here shows how despite the lapse of historical memory, the Three Altars pantheon forms a clear structural element in the standard Invitation of the Spirits ceremony of the Bǎo-ān Gōng/Xújiǎ tradition-group.

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[161] On the connection between Spirit-mediums and the phrase "Copper Horse" 銅馬 see *Jiànyáng* 115-6. These symbols of the "Copper Horse" appear in most of these Fujianese Lűshān texts.

[162] In a small number of rural temples, instead of Zhāng, Xiāo, Liú, and Lián, sometimes other somewhat obscure surnames names appear in these positions, a situation which evidently represent the innovations of Spirit-mediums. See Huáng Wénbó 2004.

In every altar of this tradition, ritual time opens with the simultaneous burning of the talisman and striking of the ritual drum, together with the loud chanting of the Invocation for Burning the Talisman.[163] Then after the invocation for the Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms is sung,[164] the liturgy moves to a long and distinctive series of standard Daoist invocations,[165] followed by a Daoist-style Invitation of the Spirits sequence[166] which is alternatingly chanted and spoken by the Central Reverend 中尊(i.e. Ritual Master), punctuated by call-and-response with the Minor Rite troupe. This preliminary, chanted and spoken Invocation of the Spirits presents an image of the entire integrated pantheon in which an articulation of the Three Altars forms an intermediate juncture between the High Gods of Daoism and the other astral, terrestrial, and subordinate deities summoned in this part of the rite.

Thus after the foregoing preliminaries, actual invitation of spirits begins by summoning, or acknowledging the supreme deities of Daoism which are enshrined in at the apex of the Jiào altar:

CXT 3.7

玉清聖境大羅元始天尊	Yuánshí Tiānzūn	The Three Pure Ones	High Daoist Gods of the Jiào Inner Altar
上清真境大聖靈寶天尊	Língbǎo Tiānzūn		
臺清仙境大聖道德天尊	Dàodé Tiānzūn		
昊天金闕至尊玉皇上帝	The Jade Emperor		
開天星主北極紫微大帝	North Pole Emperor of the Purple Subtlety		

[163] Prior to CXT 1, this formula is given in my copy of the CXT collection: 化符咒語:
靈符燒化江河海　　毫光顯現照天開
一道靈符鎮乾坤　　千妖萬怪不敢進壇門

[164] CXT 2. This is the same invocation used by the Língbǎo Daoist priests when performing such rites as Driving-away Filth by Burning Oil 焚油逐穢 in the commencement of the Jiào. Though Schipper mistakenly believed Ōfuchi omitted this invocation, it is found on pages 706-7.

[165] CXT 3.1-3.6.

[166] CXT 3.7-3.12.

道主九天應化雷聲普化天尊 Pǔhuà Tiānzūn

After Pǔhuà Tiānzūn, the deity who usually heads the Red-Headed liturgies of Táinán-area Daoist priests, next there are a series of gods that in essence represent the upper echelons of the exorcistic, Ritual Method tradition, and which includes Celestial Master Zhāng:

CXT 3.8

閭山三元三殿眞君	Lǘshān True Lord of the Three Primes and Three Palaces[167]
祖師三天大法張府天師	Ancestral Master of the Grand Rites of the Three Heavens, Celestial Master Zhāng
閭山教主徐甲眞人	Lord of the Lǘshān Teaching, the Realized Man Xújiǎ
三宮驅邪治病皇母娘娘	Her Lady the Imperial Mother, Third-Palace Exorcist and Healer of Disease
九天玄女娘娘	Her Lady, the Mysterious Woman of the Ninth Heaven
度教素車白馬大將軍	Transmitter of the Religion, Grand General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart

Then, beneath this generalized 'administration' of the Ritual Method tradition, the liturgy next invokes the immediate altar-space in which the ritual is conducted, and which again echoes the ways in which the Ritual Master tradition and the spatial installations of the temple-cult have grown together:

CXT 3:8

左壇降主龍樹醫王	Left Altar, Lord-of-submission, Medicine King Lóngshù Wáng (Nāgārjuna)
右壇北極玄天上帝	Right Altar, the North-pole Supreme Emperor of Black Heaven (Zhēnwǔ)
上壇普庵祖師大教主	Upper Altar, Grand Lord of the Religion, Ancestral Master Pǔ-ān
中壇哪吒太子李元帥	Central Altar, Prime Marshal Lǐ, Prince Nézhà

[167] I have not yet been able to identify this figure, who appears in other liturgies of the Xújiǎ tradition-group, in which I include the Red-Head liturgies transmitted by Táinán-area Daoist priests. It could perhaps indicate Xǔ Xùn, or it could well be a title-name with no other independent referent.

下壇黑虎大將軍　　Lower Altar, Grand General Black Tiger

Thus we find an articulated Three Altars pantheon invoked immediately after the high powers of the Daoist altar, and a construction of Ancestral Masters which authorize these altar spirits and connect them with the summit of the Daoist ritual cosmos. Moreover, the incorporation of Ancestral Master Pǔ-ān makes clear that we are dealing with an essentially Tantric-Popular tradition here, despite its overt integration into a Daoist framework. Also, General Black Tiger as Prime Marshal of the Lower Altar reveals the fusion of Minor Rite symbols and the temple cult, as this deity, more colloquially called Sire Tiger 虎爺, is usually enshrined on or near the floor of essentially every temple, and as part of the Minor Rite altar-system, General Black Tiger is invoked in every ritual performance by his own distinctive stanza, and treated to his own raw offerings in every Rewarding of the Troops 犒賞 ceremony. Yet these notable extensions are added to a Three Altars pantheon, with the Prince Nézhà as Prime Marshal of the Central Altar, in exactly the same way as he was designated as such in the Fujianese manuscripts examined above. There is no reference here to the Five Camps, while the Four Saints are invoked in the following section of this preliminary sequence, along with most of the 36 Official Generals.[168] Hence this distinctive and frequently-performed liturgical passage clearly preserves the Three Altars context whereby the Third Prince became the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar, though to date no other scholar or practitioner has observed this connection, nor identified the Three

[168] CXT 3.9. Additional members of this pantheon, together with numerous local deities are invoked in the final section (3.12) of this preliminary stage.

Altars pantheon in the 36 Official Generals and United Altar invocations, this despite the prominence and importance of these symbols in all forms of the Táinán-area Minor Rite.

Continuing in this same Bǎo-ān Gōng/Xújiǎ tradition, after this preliminary text, the ceremony segues to the main portion of the invocation ceremony, in which 7-character invocations are sung by the troupe, with the two left and right (or upper and lower) ranks of troupe members singing alternate lines of each stanza. This pivot to the main body of the rite begins with the dramatic consecration of Saint Golden Whip (CXT 8, 9, 10), which builds to the Central Reverend striking an iconic pose, holding the whip and standing on one foot –resembling the Ancestral Master for a moment before cracking the whip four times in a call and response that ends by summoning Prime Marshal Zhào 趙元帥 of Lónghǔshān 龍虎山 and his Black Tiger 黑虎將軍.

Then, having reached a performative and percussive climax, the troupe resumes singing, a transition the best troupes execute with hair-raising power, and sing the refrain of command: "spirit-soldiers, swift as fire, as the law commands!" Then the lone voice of the Central Reverend sings the opening words "[I] bow to summon", with the troupe then joining in with the somber melody used to summon "All the fierce generals of the United Altar" 合壇 (CXT 11)

> I bow to summon all the fierce generals of the United Altar,
> Vajra Huìji, Lóngshù Wáng [Nāgārjuna]
> Zhēnwǔ, Grand General of the North Pole,
> The Yoga Five Divisions, wheel of the three realms...
> 拜請合壇諸猛將　　衛國金光[穢跡金剛]龍樹王
> 北極真武大將軍　　瑜伽五部三界輪...

We now have the second invocation of the Three Altars pantheon, this time its original trio, though here, as in virtually all Taiwanese texts, Huìjī 穢跡 is written in alternate, near-

homophonous characters (衛國, some sources have 威國, even Vajra 金剛 is written in the Mínnán homophones 金光). As in the Black-Head tradition-group, this same version of the United Altar invocation is used to commence the main part of the ritual, so that the Three Altars pantheon is summoned first, with the disguised Vajra Huìjī at the forefront.

Yet the Three Altars pantheon and its triadic structure are reinforced yet again, for in every performance of the Bǎo-ān Gōng/Xújiǎ tradition group, after the United Altar (CXT 11) the next two invocations sung (in the melody used for the rest of the ceremony) are Medicine King Lóngshù 龍樹醫王 (CXT 12), and 玄天上帝 Xuántiān Shàngdì, i.e. Zhēnwǔ (CXT 12). In other words, the United Altar invocation, led by Vajra Huìjī, functions as a symbol of Huìjī's Central Altar, while the "base" pair of the Three Altars are then summoned –for the third time now– in their own, individual invocations, sung in the same sequence which they appear in all representations of the Three Altars pantheon. Hence even where the specific knowledge identifying the Three Altars has long faded from memory, the central importance of these symbols had, at some earlier and formative period, become clearly established in the structure of this tradition-group's ritual sequence. And amid other modifications, impelled by the conservative impulse to respect and follow received tradition, generations of Ritual Masters instinctively preserved these symbolic structures as of essential importance to the integrity of the tradition, even where specific knowledge of their identities had faded from view.

Bǎoshēng Dàdì in the Center: The Realized Man Wú 吳真人 in the Three Altars and the Five Camps

A notable feature of the Táinán-area Minor Rite is the particular role given to the god Bǎoshēng Dàdì 保生大帝 in the Black-Head tradition group. In several important invocations shared by most Táinán Black-Head altars (but not the Bǎo-ān Gōng "Red-Headed" tradition-group), under different titles Bǎoshēng Dàdì is depicted as presiding over important subordinate pantheons, from the Five Camps in one particular formula, to the Tantric spirits of the Root Altar 本壇 invocation. In the Grand Rewarding of the Troops 大犒賞 of the Miàoshòu Gōng in Ānpíng, their main god Bǎoshēng Dàdì is repeatedly invoked as the central of the Three Altars pantheon.

In his study of Bǎoshēng Dàdì, Kenneth Dean found a broadly similar situation in both ritual practices and a scripture for the god at his Ancestral Temple in Bǎijiāo 白礁, Tóng-ān County. Commenting on depiction of the deity in *The True Scripture of Bǎoshēng Dàdì* 保生大帝真經, Dean remarks that

> Not only is the Taoist god [Bǎoshēng Dàdì] under the command of Taishang Laojun 太上老君, and at the same time the transformation body of Guanyin, he is also associated with the Center, surrounded by the four heraldic powers. At the Center he is also in the position of Commander of the Camps of the Five Spirit Soldiers [or, Armies], whose chanting bands of 'barefoot lads' and mediums I describe below.[169]

In the promised description of these 'barefoot lads', Dean reports that during Presentation of Incense 進香 processions to the Ancestral Temple in the lead-up to the god's birthday

[169] Kenneth Dean, *Taoism and Popular Religion in Southeast China* (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1988), 110.

(on 3/15), temple-groups with Spirit-mediums and Minor Rite troupes were quite numerous:

> Many groups from Tongan were led by young mediums in traditional yellow medium's aprons, who worked with four young men dressed in aprons of four different colors. These troupes represent the five spirit soldier camps that protect many villages in this region. They would chant long rhythmic passages to a pounding drum, then assist the medium as he went into a trance. A god's silk umbrella was lowered over the medium's head as skewers were struck through his cheeks. Then the medium would continue dancing and leaping wildly about as the chanting went on. At each drum beat all five men would hop...Some of the men in the aprons of the five camps were much older and were probably Ritual Masters responsible for the training of this young generation.[170]

Here Dean describes a particular pentadic configuration of Ritual Master/Minor Rite troupes in which the troupe personifies the Five Camps, with the Spirit-medium as the Central Camp, dressed in a yellow apron, with yellow being the color of the center (symbolic of the element Earth), while the other four are dressed "in other colors," most likely green, red, white, and black for the east, south, west, and north respectively.[171] With the Spirit-medium in the center, this means that the deity, Bǎoshēng Dàdì is identified with the center, an arrangement evidently common throughout the area, if multiple groups performed in this manner. Manifest in three different interpretations, this same identification of Bǎoshēng Dàdì with the center appears in formula of the Táinán-area Minor Rite.

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[170] Ibid.,, 152-3.

[171] A similar arrangement is often seen in the Pénghú Minor Rite, particularly in certain rites for the Five Camps, where the Ritual Master stands in the center, wearing yellow headgear, rather than the Spirit-medium.

First, regarding the Five Camps, there is a formula used in all Black-Head Minor Rite altars (and many Pénghú altars as well) which concludes the final Binding-up the Altar-space 結界 (gět gaǐ) sequence of Summoning the Camps 調營, usually known by its first line, "Coming from the upper side, cut off the upper side", 上方來，上方斬:

上方來，上方斬，下方來，下方斬。
為吾斬斷東方木輪界
為吾斬斷南方火輪界
為吾斬斷西方金輪界
為吾斬斷北方水輪界
為吾斬斷中央土輪界
自祭真君中央座[=慈濟真君]
五營兵馬四方排
寸寸斬不留停
火急如律令

In this final act of Binding-up the Altar-space, which concludes the Summoning of the Camps and thereby creates a spiritually-sealed ritual arena, with each phrase of "cutting-off," the Ritual Master faces the appropriate direction and slashes downward with the ritual sword to effect this "cutting off" with the classic fusion of language and gesture which marks ritual as a distinct linguistic and communicative mode. And then at the very end, a line states that the Realized Lord of Compassionate Salvation 慈濟真君 sits in the center. Though written in homophonous characters, this is clearly the title of Bǎoshēng Dàdì, who is shown in the center of the Five Camps, much like the Spirit-mediums and Minor Rite troupes of the god's ancestral Tóng-ān region, in which the possessed medium, i.e. Bǎoshēng Dàdì himself, performed in the central position during Ritual Master ceremony for the Five Camps.

In the Ānpíng Miàoshòu Gōng's Grand Rewarding of the Troops, performed three times per year,[172] the long and distinctive text of this rite presents Bǎoshēng Dàdì as the central of the Three Altars. In the initial Daoist-style invitation of the spirits section of this liturgy, which begins with the high Daoist gods and then descends through a series of Ritual Method Prime Marshals, Saints of Yoga 瑜伽, after a section-break in the liturgy the next section begins by summoning Pǔhuà Tiānzūn (by his long title),[173]followed by

> Lord of the Altar, Ancestral Master, Ancient Buddha Boddhisattva, Proclaiming Official Title of Compassionate Salvation, Universal Assistance, Marvelous Way, Unlimited Longevity, The Grand Emperor Who Protects Life (Bǎoshēng Dàdì)
> 壇主祖師古佛菩薩宣封慈濟普佑妙道萬壽無疆保生大帝

Immediately following are

> Left Altar, Nine heavens Lord of [Preaching] Medicine King Nāgārjuna
> Right Altar, North Pole Guardian of Heaven Zhēnwǔ, Xuántiān Shàngdì
> 左壇九天講主龍樹醫王，右壇北極鎮天真武玄天上帝

Interestingly, there follow four more deities (including Prime Marshal Guān 關元帥, the Míng title for Guān Gōng seen in the United Altar), with the fifth being Central Altar, Nézhà, Prime Marshal Lǐ. Thus while the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar has been displaced by Bǎoshēng Dàdì, he still appears just some lines below, not far from what might otherwise be his central position (again there is no mention of the Five Camps in this part of the liturgy).

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[172] On Greeting the Gods 接神 (1/4), Bǎoshēng Dàdì's birthday (3/13), and with a slightly different liturgy, at the Ānpíng Tiānhòu Gōng on Māzǔ's birthday (3/23).
[173] 玉樞教主九天應元雷聲普化天尊.

Then, over the course of this long and somewhat complex rite, three times the proceedings shift to a completely different melody, with an unusual, staggered singing style, in which three short stanzas are sung:

Left Altar, Lord of Submission King Dragon-tree [Nāgārjuna],
Riding a green dragon, he descends to the altar gate.
Manifesting a pearly radiance, illuminating Heaven and Earth,
Vow of compassion for peace and prosperity to last ten thousand years.
左壇降主龍樹王　　身騎青龍赴壇門
顯明珠照耀滿乾坤　慈悲願安泰萬年春

Third day of the Third month, the Dark Emperor was born,
Forty two years, each morning he practiced cultivation.
On Wǔdāng Mountain in broad daylight he ascended into Heaven,
Guarding the north, the fruit of his cultivation was completed in a morning.
三月三日玄帝生　　四十二年早收[修]行
武當山白日昇天廳　鎮北方道果早完成

Realized Lord Wú of Compassionate Salvation and Universal Blessing,
On the fifteenth of the Third month, he descended on that fragrant dawn,
Late twilight of springtime, the transformation body of Guānyīn,
Practicing [ritual with] talisman water, universally saving people of the mortal world.
慈濟普佑吳真君　　三月十五降芳晨
莫諸春觀音水化身　行符水普就世間人

These stanzas, sung together and in a completely distinctive way, are clearly meant to invoke the Realized Man Wú, Bǎoshēng Dàdì, as the third or central of a Three Altars trio. As these three stanzas are sung three times throughout the rite, each time requiring a pause and rearrangement of troupe-members to play a drum and small cymbal, this lyric invocation of the Three Altars serves to culminate and demarcate ritual stages, thus not unlike how in the Bǎo-ān Gōng Invitation of the Spirits, thrice-repeated invocation of the Three Altars symbols serves to both emphasize the importance of this trio, and to structure the liturgical sequence. When, in the final stage of the Grand Rewarding of the Troops,

the spirits are again named so as to be rewarded, this trio is again invoked in exactly the same way as in the opening.

Given the prominence of the Three Altars pantheon and symbol all of Táinán-area Minor Rite traditions, this adaptation whereby Bǎoshēng Dàdì has become associated with the Central Altar further demonstrates the enduring preeminence of the Three Altars as an authoritative concept in Mínnán Ritual Master practice, while also indicating how the integration among Tantric-Popular Ritual Method and the temple cult is a fully bi-directional process of mutual interaction, one in which Spirit-mediums have continued to play a leading role by personifying the deity in ways which have directly shaped liturgical and symbolic arrangements, as seen in the association of Bǎoshēng Dàdì with the central of the Five Camps. This is an important point, as it again indicates how Spirit-medium performance often exerts a "bottom up" energy to the formation of ritual arrangements and their textual expressions.[174]

Bǎoshēng Dàdì and the Root Altar 本壇

In the preceding examples, Bǎoshēng Dàdì is invoked in Black-Head tradition-group ritual texts as associated with the central of the Five Camps and the Three Altars, and in both cases the rites in question are occasional rituals for the spirit-soldiers of the Five Camps. But in the standard Purification of the Altar of most Táinán-city Black-Head altars,

[174] Dean (1988:110) finds that the despite the strong Daoist and indeed Buddhistic layers of symbolism found in Bǎoshēng Dàdì's overall cult, Spirit-mediums have played and continue to play a prominent and indeed formative role in both of his Ancestral Temples (at Qīngjiāo and Bǎijiāo) as well as branch temples in the region. This particularly important role of Spirit-mediums and other spiritist techniques, such as the possessed sedan-chair, are further linked to the spiritistic prescription of medicines, as discussed elsewhere in this study.

Bǎoshēng Dàdì is also portrayed as a Lord-of-the-Rite or Ancestral Master presiding over one of the main, highly Tantric subordinate pantheons of the entire tradition, the spirits of the Root Altar, as this invocation is known in the Chéngxīn Tán folio (and all Bǎo-ān Gōng sources), while in some lineages this invocation is called the Ten Grand Generals 十大將. In these latter cases, however, there is no association with Bǎoshēng Dàdì, who has been added to this broadly circulated stanza only in sources of the Táinán-city Black-Head tradition-group, thus further suggesting an origin in the Tóng-ān/Xiàmén region for this variety of the Táinán Minor Rite.

The Root Altar invocation and its Bǎoshēng Dàdì adaptation are sung in virtually every Táinán-city Minor Rite performance, and as this same invocation is found in Pénghú and Zhānghuà it is one of the fundamental invocations of the broader tradition.[175] In it, a pentadic altar-space of Tantric-named spirits is established, together with the Four Grand Generals Seize, Bind, Cangue, and Lock, the personified instruments of restraint found in Daoist Ritual Method texts of Investigating and Summoning 考召, and which in Minor Rite texts these four are consistently connected with the Three Altars.[176] To account for ten generals here, it appears that leading the initial pentad is a sixth who presiding over them. This pentad and its ostensible chief are clearly derived from, or meant to resemble Tantric deities with transliterated Sanskrit names, but the names themselves do not have direct correspondences in texts of Esoteric Buddhism, and so their sources or identities have proven elusive, and as Hsieh Shu-wei concludes, these deities may perhaps best be

[175] One of two Zhānghuà sources is made available by Liú Zhīwàn in 「閭山教之收魂法」.
[176] E.g. CXT 168-171.

understood as representing the domestication of Tantric symbols within the cultural contexts of Popular Tantric Ritual Masters, rather than indicating the direct transmission of symbols from scriptural Esoteric Buddhism.[177] Moreover, these names are not entirely consistent among different sources, rendering any tentative identification all the more problematic.

Here are the two versions of the Táinán-area Root Altar invocation, one identified with Bǎoshēng Dàdì (HST 1:7) and the other without this association. In both, the names of the Tantric-derived spirits are underlined.

HST1:7 保生大帝
Bǎoshēng Dàdì

仰啓輔天吳真人　五方捉縛虎伽儸
東方木得虎儸威　南方火德虎威羅
西方金德威能行　北方黑德虎馬牢[178]
中方聖者軍靈行　威風凜凜不思議
捉縛枷鎖四大將　總押水消大神王
維王登策不可問　正力尊權難可得
或在天中神歸依　或在波浪斬蛟龍
或在金輪養精神　或在世間救萬民
不問諸神為何鬼　不問十惡狐狸精
不問山神為道鬼　不問宣威受勅神
若有不正為何鬼　押去壇前化作塵
弟子壇前專拜請　保生大帝速降臨
火急如律令

CXT 22 本壇大將
Grand Generals of the Root Altar

拜請本壇諸大將　五方治鬼虎伽羅
東方木帝虎羅威　南方火帝馬伽羅
西方金帝為龍帝　北方黑帝馬羅威
中央哪吒三太子　威風凜凜不順儀
捉縛伽鎖四大將　斬押平消大神郎
醫王定尺不可問　正在為水難可得
或在天官神歸依　或在波浪斬蛟龍
或在人間救諸苦　或在端風受勅神
不問門神拜戶尉　不問什惡眾鬼神
不問山神無道鬼　不問禍福不正神
若有不正無禍鬼　押到天邊入金輪
為吾爐中行法降　行罡步斗到壇前
法門弟子專拜請　本壇大將降臨來

[177] Hsieh Shu-wei,《道密法圓》, 16-25.
[178] Ma-luǐ 馬牢 homophone for 馬羅.

Translation of HST 1:7 Bǎoshēng Dàdì

I reverently summon[179] the Supporter of Heaven, the Realized Man Wú [Gñoú],
The Hou-ḡei-luń spirits of the five directions who seize and bind:
Hou-ḡei-luń of the East and the power of Wood,
Ĥou-w̄ee-luń of the South and the power of Fire.
Wee-ling-hinńǵ of the West and the power of Metal
Ĥou-m̂a-luń of the North and the Power of Black.
The Holy General of Numinous Action of the Center,[180]
A mighty wind, fierce and frightening, unimaginable.
The Four Great Generals Seize, Fetters, Cangue, Lock,
Arrest all and [send them to] the Great Spirit-King of Water that [makes things] disappear.
The Medicine King fixes the gavel-ruler, unquestionable,[181]
Righteous power and reverend authority, difficult to obtain.
Perhaps in the midst of Heaven, taking refuge [in the teaching],
Perhaps amid the waves slaying the fell-dragon.
Perhaps in the Golden Wheel nourishing his spiritual essence,
Perhaps in the mortal world saving the common people.
No matter [faced with] what gods or what kind of ghosts,
No matter [if it's] the Fox-spirit of ten evils,
No matter [if it's] a Mountain Spirit or ghost "without the Dào",
No matter [if it's] a god who claims to have received authorized command.
If there be any unrighteous ghosts of any kind,
Seize and send them before the altar, and render them unto dust.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
The Grand Emperor who Protects Life swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

Before examining the major Tantric-derived symbols here, it is worth noting some of the other imagery in this text, as much of the stanza is devoted to describing the ritual adversaries of the spirits invoked here, who include fox-spirits and mountain deities (perhaps the "mountain goblins" 山魈 associated with the Five Powers 五通), and most interestingly, "gods who claim to have received authorized command," which is to say deities enshrined in temples which their

[179] Note appearance of "仰啓" rather than 謹請; the meaning is essentially the same, and, like 謹請 is frequently used in Daoist invocations。

[180] CXT has the Third Prince Lǐ aka the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar here 中央哪吒三太子.

[181] Here following CXT 22 and other sources (XLA 4) that have 醫王定尺 for the problematic 維王登策.

worshippers profess to be "orthodox spirits" 正神, perhaps complete with the trappings of Daoist investiture. These are many of the spiritual sources of illness and misfortune (often through soul-capture) which Spirit-mediums might have diagnosed as causing people's maladies. With classic violent language, these spiritual pathogens are to be seized by the subordinate spirits, brought before the altar and "transformed into dust" 化作塵.

Turning to the pentadic spirits at the core of this stanza, a comparison of different sources reveals a certain variety amid general consistency, showing the relative stability of these obscure symbols across textual traditions. Below are the five directional deities and leading sixth in HST 1:7 and CXT 22, in line-item comparison with Liú Zhìwàn's Zhānghuà source[182] (HST top, then CXT, and Liú's text [LZW] beneath); homophonous or identical names underlined similarly. As this is a performative text, the Taiwanese-Mínnán pronunciations are given here.

五方捉縛虎伽儸 Seize-and-Bind Ĥou-gyia-luǹ of the Five Directions (HST)
五方治鬼虎伽羅 Controller-of-Ghosts Ĥou-gyia-luǹ of the Five Directions (CXT)
五方捉縛龍虎羅 Seize-and-Bind Linng-ĥou-luǹ of the Five Directions (LZW)

東方木德虎羅威 Eastern Wood Power Ĥou-lūh-weé (HST)
東方木帝虎羅威 Eastern Wood Emperor Ĥou-lūh-weé (CXT)
東方木德虎羅威 Eastern Wood Power Ĥou-lūh-weé (LZW)

南方火德馬伽羅 Southern Fire Power M̂a-gyia-luǹ (HST)
南方火帝馬伽羅 Southern Fire Emperor M̂a-gyia-luǹ (CXT)
南方火德虎馬羅 Southern Fire Power Ĥou-m̂a-luǹ (LZW)

西方金德威能行 Western Metal Power Wēe-lîng-hiǹg (HST)
西方金帝為龍帝 Western Metal Emperor Wēe-lîng-deǐ (CXT)
西方金德醫能德 Western Metal Power Ȳee-lîng-diǩ (LZW)

[182] That CXT and Liú Zhìwàn's text from Zhānghuà are related traditions is further demonstrated in that both CXT and Liú's Zhānghuà text have assigned the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar to the central position 中央哪吒三太子 Sam-tai-tzu. The HST text appears to preserve an older alternative that was, in CXT and its precursors, ostensibly displaced by the Third Prince.

北方黑德馬羅威 Northern Black Power M̂a-Īuh-weé (HST)
北方黑帝馬羅威 Northern Black Emperor M̂a-Īuh-weé (CXT)
北方黑德虎伽羅 Northern Black Power Ĥou-gyia-luĥ (LZW)

中方聖者軍靈行 The Central Saint, Ḡun-Īing-híng (HST)
中央哪吒三太子 In the Center, the Third Prince Ḹuh-chiâ (CXT)
中央使者君哪吒 The Central Emissary Ḹuh-chiâ (Nézhà) (LZW)

Of these deities, we know from Bái Yùchán's account that that the pair M̂a-gyia-luĥ(Mǎ Jiāluó)馬伽羅 and Ĥou-gyia-luĥ(Hǔ Jiāluó) 虎伽儸 were already associated with a quartet of spirits in the Yoga tradition he describes in the Southern Sòng, and as we have seen these two have become incorporated into the 36 Official Generals pantheon as well, while appearing in the invocations for Lord-of-the-Rite Zhāng 張法主公 in his capacity as the Eastern of the Five Camps.[183]

In his 1974 study of the Lűshān rite of Gathering-in the Soul, Liú Zhīwàn offers an extended attempt to identify at least this primary pair of Mǎ Jiāluó ahd Hǔ Jiāluó. Liú's conclusion is that this pair is derived from the class of Tantric serpent-spirits known in Sanskrit as the Mahoraja, and transliterated into Chinese as 摩睺羅(M. Mó-hoú-luó) and 摩睺羅迦 (Mó-hoú luó-jiā), among other writings. Liú bases his identification on several Sòng sources which identify a deity named Mó-hoú-luó 摩睺羅 (and other near homophones 磨喝樂), and report that this god was "originally from the Western Regions" and had become the object of widespread veneration on 7/7, a date traditionally connected with women praying for skill in weaving and for sons.[184]

[183] HST 1:49 張公聖者. Liú Zhīwàn also notes this cross-reference, and his source for Madame Línshuĭ also mentions Mǎ Jiāluó 馬伽羅.
[184] Liú,「閭山教之收魂法」, 324.

While Liú proceeds to give a fascinating review of Sòng-era worship of this Tantric-derived deity Mó-hoú-luó (or Mó-hoú luó-jiā),[185] there is a significant problem with this identification which Liú was methodologically insensitive to, namely that in Sòng and later sources, of the two gods Liú seeks to identify we do not have "Mó-hoú luó-jiā," but rather with complete consistency it is always Mǎ and Hǔ Jiā-luó, not luó-jiā. Moreover, in all of the homophonous writings for Mahoraja which Liú finds in historical sources and lists on page 322 of his study: 摩訶羅，魔合羅，摩合羅，磨合羅，摩睺羅，摩侯羅，魔睺羅，暮和樂，in none of them do we find a character with a pronunciation like 伽 gyiâ/jiā at all, much less before the 羅 luǐ/luó syllable.[186] To account for this discrepancy, Liú attributes the addition of the 伽 gyiâ/jiā syllable to a case of Ritual Masters

> looking at the text word by word, and not understanding its actual meaning invented farfetched interpretations, which then became an error handed down, and thereby created 虎加羅, [further] making a symmetry between 'horse' 馬 and 'tiger' 虎. And thus due to the fact that in terms of the spirit's name, they only read the letters of the text without understanding its meaning, and invented their own interpretation, or perhaps because of the similarity of pronunciation, this led to a case of 'drawing a snake and adding feet' [i.e. made pointless additions], and of '[bamboo] nodes growing ever more branches', which, in popular folk belief happens continuously without ceasing, and is so common as to hardly be surprising 望文生義，以訛傳訛，遂另創虎加羅，俾馬與虎對稱者。而此一由於對神名望文生義，或因因諧，一致畫蛇添足，節外生枝之現象，在民間俗信上，層出不窮，司空見慣也.[187]

[185] Ibid., 321-331.
[186] Luó 羅, it should be noted, is among the most common of all transliterated-Sanskrit syllables, usually representing either 'ra', like in dhāraṇī 陀羅尼, or 'ar' like in Arhat 羅漢.
[187] Liú Zhìwàn,「閻山教之收魂法」, 322.

This thesis of top-down cultural corruption by fanciful error is emblematic of how the renown godfather of Taiwanese ethnography perceived popular culture in general. However, I do not believe the broad field of evidence supports Liú's viewpoint.

Objections over one or two transliterated syllables may seem like a trifling concern given the penchant for corrupt characters and the limits of historical memory witnessed in these Tantric-Popular Ritual Method sources. But in fact what we have seen in these sources, from the case of Vajra Huìjī to the obscured Four Saints of the North Pole is a remarkable phonetic consistency despite orthographic shifts and lapses of memory. From northern Fújiàn to Táiwān we find Huìjī 穢跡(ùei-jiǩ) written as 威跡 (ūee-jiǩ) and 衛國 (ūee-goǩ), but not once have the syllables been switched to 跡威 (jik-ueê) or something of this sort.

The impulse to conservatism by which Ritual Masters have preserved symbols and symbolic traces in their liturgical systems is in fact quite remarkable, all the more so given the drift of written representation which has clearly followed phonetic intelligibility (what given Ritual Masters could understand and associate with the sounds involved) rather than strict informational representation. Thus I am skeptical that in this instance, a heretofore unprecedented case of wholescale phonetic discombobulation would become introduced to the tradition at an early point in its formation, and would rather suggest that any theories to identifying the sources or potential models for these Tantric-derived spirits should likely correspond, however broadly, with the phonetics involved.

Given the commonality of the syllables "jiāluó" in Esoteric Buddhist terminology, potential sources of these symbols are numerous, including the Garuḍas 迦樓羅 (Jiā-loú-luó) whom Strickmann suspected as the likely source of Mǎ and Hǔ Jiāluó as mentioned in Bái Yùchán's

discourse on Yoga ritualists.[188] As this would require the elision of a syllable, rather than their scrambling, this is a more reasonable theory, and is further supported by the fact that Garuḍas were associated with healing ritual in Esoteric Buddhism.[189]

Another possibility is suggested by the phonetics of Hǔ 虎(Hoù) Jiāluó and Mǎ 馬(Mà) Jiāluó themselves. In Esoteric Buddhist texts depicting the Garbhadatu Maṇḍala pantheon,[190] we find that among the highly influential Five Great Luminous Kings 五大明王, a manifestation of one of them, named Trailokyavijaya in Sanskrit, and Jiàngsānshì 降三世 in Chinese (a translation, not transliteration of his Sanskrit name), is also called Bodhisattva Vajra Hǒu Jiāluó 菩薩吽迦羅金剛,[191] an close phonetic match with the Mínnán pronunciation of 虎伽羅 Hoù gya-luĥ (Hǔ Jiāluó). In the same Maṇḍala pantheon, just before Vajra Hǒu Jiāluó is Luminous King Horse-Head 馬頭明王, known as Hayagrivā in Sanskrit, and considered a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara.[192] The pairing of these two in the Garbhadatu Maṇḍala is very suggestive, as we have both a close phonetic match with our Hǔ Jiāluó, and directly adjacent to this figure a horse-headed symbol in the same group of Luminous Kings.

Whatever the case, the pentad of spirits given in the Root Altar invocation is perhaps better viewed as the product of Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters, who crafted symbols reflective of their own cultural vantage, rather than representing a direct descendent of Esoteric Buddhist systems,

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[188] Strickmann *Magical Medicine*, 65n.30

[189] Strickmann *Magical Medicine*, 252 n.47.Davis (2004) offers a speculative identification with "Yakṣas", though strictly speaking virtually all Tantric deities amount to converted Yakṣas –local 'Hindu' deities of various kinds, much as Daoist Prime Marshals and Spirit Officers in essence represent subordinated local gods. (Davis' proposed interpretations are presented in Hsieh,《道密法圓》, 18. On Yakṣas in Indian religion and their relation to Tantra, see Samuel *Origins of Yoga and Tantra*, 101-110.

[190] T.864b, 胎藏金剛教法名號一卷.

[191] DDB, 降三世明王; T.864b, 胎藏金剛教法名號一卷 .

[192] DDB, 馬頭明王, 馬頭觀音.

though the precedent of the Five Luminous Kings forms one of the more likely inspirations for such a ritual pentad. Much like the Three Altars symbols, the wide distribution and regular performance of the Root Altar pantheon signals its historic importance to earlier manifestations of these Ritual Method traditions. Likewise, the association of Bǎoshēng Dàdì with this core Minor Rite pantheon further underscores the ritual importance of this text. As a complete spatial altar-system, this is the kind of invocation that could likely have been used with perhaps only one or two others for the establishment of a ritual space to then conduct further operations, like ritual healing and Spirit-medium performance, in which the deified instruments of restraint would have played a symbolic role.

Hence in this one text we see numerous themes in the history and nature of the Tantric-Popular Ritual Method: the transformation or domestication of Tantric symbols, ritual healing envisioned as warfare against environmental spirits and temple deities, a war conducted through violence applied by subaltern deities like the personified instruments of restraint. The association of Bǎoshēng Dàdì with this invocation again underscores the extensive integration among temple cults and Tantric-Popular Ritual Method traditions, whose Ritual Masters continue to specialize in the rites whereby the temple-cult is reproduced, maintained, and deployed in action through the Spirit-medium performance. Finally, the retention of all of these symbols in the invocation manuscripts, even absent specific healing ritual contexts or the veneration of Bǎoshēng Dàdì as a temple's deity attests to the remarkable fidelity with which Ritual Masters have handed down their traditions, even as a mode of transmission concerned with ritual performance rather than exegetic knowledge has meant that numerous symbols have become obscured through variant, homophonous writings over time.

Conclusions: Integrated Pantheons and the Variable Frame

In the beginning of this chapter, I outlined what I called the "variable frame" of the integrated regional pantheon, in which the relative proportions or apparent magnitude of Daoist, Ritual Method, and Popular symbols vary according to which ritual experts are performing at any given time. Hence in the Daoist Jiào altar and its analogue in the Daoist Invitation of the Spirits, the Daoist cosmic administration and its Ritual Method symbols loom large over the temple deities, who are only mentioned at the very end of the liturgy, the place corresponding to their enshrinement at the outer margin of the Jiào altar itself.

But in Minor Rite ceremony, which is fundamentally rooted in the temple-cult, this integration is interpreted differently by in essence beginning in the middle, as it were, of the Língbǎo Daoist's section of Ritual Method symbols in their Invitation of the Spirits liturgy. The Minor Rite and Língbǎo systems are not merely contingent, they substantially overlap within this Ritual Method domain, and employ many of the same symbols for exactly the same purposes: the Talisman Emissaries, the Nine-Phoenix Destroyer of Filth both commence ritual, while other exorcistic symbols, from General White Horse of the Unadorned Cart to other Prime Marshals all appear in the altar-systems of both the Minor Rite and the Língbǎo Daoists, even though the latter exclude the Tantric-Popular deities from their principle, non-Red-Headed rites.

Aside from this fundamental distinction between the two hemispheres of Ritual Method symbolism maintained by these more conservative Língbǎo Daoists, the greatest differences are found in the inverted proportions given to the two "ends" of the Daoist ritual cosmos. The Minor Rite is overwhelmingly oriented toward the community of temple cults, and though reference is made to the high Daoist gods, they are usually not formally summoned in Minor Rite ceremony.

Instead, the majority of the service is dedicated to the Ritual Master's altar-spirits and to gods of the temple. This is the reverse of the Daoist ritual, in which the entire ritual involves their high divinities and cosmic administration, in which local gods are given a few lines at the end, or bottom of every depiction of the spiritual hierarchy. In the Minor Rite this is reversed, and again emphasizes how the traditions of Tantric-Popular Ritual Masters have for centuries formed a symbiotic existence with the networked altars of the Common Religion, while Daoist ritual has, also for centuries, established a ritual firmament arching over the territorial precincts of local temples. Between the deathless divinities of the Dào and the deified dead we find the strata of symbolism and performance of the Ritual Method, in both its Daoist-brand form, as represented in the Prime Marshals of the Jiào altar, and in the Tantric-Popular domain, whose ritual repertoire serves to bring the gods, mediums, and cultic elements of the Common Religion within priestly control, so that the Spirit-medium is not unchecked in his or her influence, while cults to different gods have, in this and other regions, come to share a commensurate ritual life, orchestrated primarily through Ritual Master ceremony. Thus in virtually every temple, even those few where Ritual Master is but rare, the Five Camps –deified Tantric Ritual Masters– guard the temple and its precinct, while the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar stands on the central altar-table of the temple, a universal convention surely connected one way or another to his enshrinement at the Center of the Three Altars.

Chapter 3 The Minor Rite Invocations of the Táinán Ritual Master Tradition

Introduction

At the center of the Minor Rite are the texts of invocations and other liturgies which form the basis of ritual performance and ongoing transmission of the tradition itself. These invocation manuscripts are all the more remarkable for the simple fact that they amount to a body of ritual texts indigenous to temple-cults of the Mínnán-Taiwanese Common Religion, a strata of the religious culture which has often been depicted and even defined by the relative lack of texts in religious practice. In many temples one can find texts of the cryptic Divination-slip Poems 籤詩 and related Medicine divination-slip 藥籤 genres, whose individual card-sized pages are available in temples for use by ordinary worshippers; likewise there are often a variety of Buddhist, Daoist, Popular, and Sectarian scriptures deposited by outside religious organizations and donated for general consumption. But unlike these other types of text one might encounter in a temple setting, the invocations and other liturgies of the Minor Rite are not concerned with the individual needs of ordinary worshippers, nor produced by outside groups and shelved in some inconspicuous corner.

Rather, the texts of the Minor Rite-Ritual Master tradition form the very basis of rites whereby the temple-cult and its elements are reproduced and maintained, while these same invocations are used to summon the temple's deities into their Spirit-mediums. Other rites serve to enact ritual transfers and transformations over people, places, things, and spirits, so as to effect ritual healing, purification, exorcistic protection, and fortune-boosting. These performative texts provide the linguistic content of rites by which the sacred is made manifest, the temple-cult made viable, and ritual objectives realized. As a body of written literature native to the networked altars

of the regional Common Religion, the invocations are filled with symbols and images which proclaim the ideology of the religion, describe its practices, and offer invaluable clues to its history as well. Moreover, by examining the actual performance of these ritual texts, we can learn how the religion is constructed in practice, and better understand why the invocation texts have taken their particular forms.

As ritual texts which effect transformations and cause deities to manifest, they are, like Daoist liturgical texts, a traditionally guarded body of technical "trade secrets," and are thus unlike other kinds of scriptures which are openly distributed. However, given the broader participation in Minor Rite practice, patters of exchange among branching lines of transmission, and the rise of internet technology and social media, Minor Rite invocations are slowly emerging out from the realm of guarded secrecy, and now enjoy greater exposure –especially online– than would have been conceivable in previous eras. However, obtaining access to larger or more complete collections of invocations, as have been examined in this study, still requires close collaboration with practicing Minor Rite altars.

While formerly the invocations were primarily memorized, and in some lineages still are, nowadays, from Pénghú to the Táinán region, in most cases texts are placed on the altar so that troupe members directly recite from the texts themselves. In the Prefectural City, this is usually done by placing a single volume of the invocations on a stand at the front and center of the altar-table, together with the other consecrated ritual implements, so that the invocation text forms a prominent visual parallel with the spirit-images enshrined on the altar behind.[1] Thus the texts

[1] In Pénghú and Ānpíng, because the troupe stands around rather than in front of the altar-table, usually one or two copies of the invocation text are laid flat on each side of the table so that troupe members may recite from the text.

themselves have become part of the sacred media and aesthetics of the rite, thereby lending the authority of the written word to the carefully proportioned ritual space.

As a genuinely popular, or primarily non-elite form of sacred literature, the Minor Rite texts suggest that they were composed and transmitted by individuals who possessed different levels of literacy. In some cases, these Minor Rite texts formed the primary means to literacy. The eminent 20th C. Ritual Master Lín Dòuzhī 林斗枝 (1936-2017) received only one year of Japanese-administered education, but learned to write purely by copying his master's (Wú Luóhàn 吳羅漢 1886-?) liturgical texts, all without formal knowledge of Chinese character components, but purely by trial-and-error copying of older manuscripts. Without other concrete examples, it is hard to estimate how widespread the acquisition of functional literacy through the Minor Rite texts might have been in past eras, but conceivably, for many Ritual Masters and their disciples, the Minor Rite ritual texts may have been some of the only texts they routinely read or copied.

The countless corrupt and homophonous characters found throughout different Minor Rite manuscripts testify to how these texts often served to bridge realms of predominantly oral culture with that of the written word. While these performative texts feature certain hallmarks of oral literature, such as repeated stock phrases and a 7/7 meter, whose couplets are conducive to both incantation and memorization, the wide distribution of these and similar texts across Fújiàn and greater Táiwān, as well as their preservation of historic symbols and textual elements all demonstrate that the genre as a whole has been written and handed down through textual form for some considerable time. Thus despite the effects of textual transmission on the very frontiers of literacy, the evidence suggests that Asano Haruji is incorrect where, regarding these Minor Rite texts he argues (EOT 416) that "[a]t present, they are recorded in books transmitted from master

to disciple, but originally their transmission was oral." Though oral transmission may have occurred in some instances, and is still true for certain formula, oral transmission cannot account for the wide distribution of these texts, or their close preservation of numerous historical elements which can be shown to have Daoist textual roots.

For example, Kenneth Dean and Zheng Zhenman find extensive distribution of such invocation texts in southern and central regions of coastal Fújiàn. In the vicinity of Jiāngkǒu 江口, Pǔtián 莆田 County, Dean reports that "temples also keep *Shenzhou Ce* 神咒冊 ("Books of Divine Spells") which are the chants describing the lives and titles of the gods in the temples. These are taught to a group of all the young men of the village, around the age of 12 or 13."[2] Elsewhere he finds that the "altar associations" 壇班 responsible for training and leading the performance of Spirit-mediums "preserve handbooks consisting of [...] spells of the gods of the temple, spells for minor exorcisms, [and] passages of spirit-medium writing. These texts are passed down in manuscript handbooks from one leader of the spirit medium troupes, the *tanban* 壇班 (altar directors) or *shuban*, to another."[3] The descriptions and quotations which the authors provide give evidence to extensive similarities with the greater Taiwanese Minor Rite, including ceremonies for the Five Camps, even involving the relatively obscure figure of Lú Tàibǎo 盧太保, who is invoked in the same context in Táinán-area traditions.[4] Dean and Zheng also observe that "[t]hese materials could be compared with those of the Ritual Masters tradition of the Penghu Islands or of southern

[2] Dean, *Taoism and Popular Religion in Southeast China*, 265.
[3] Kenneth Dean and Zheng Zhenman,"Group initiation and exorcistic dance in the Xinghua region." *Mínsú Qūyì* 民俗曲藝, 第 85 期 (1993):140-3, and Dean and Zheng, *Ritual Alliances*, 160.
[4] Dean and Zheng, "Group initiation and exorcistic dance,"131. For Lú Tàibǎo see CXT 183 協曹盧太保. In Táinán-area traditions, a goddess named "Suppressor of Soldiers, Second Lady Lú" 押兵盧二娘 (CXT 116) also frequently appears in rites for the spirit-soldiers of the Five Camps, but is otherwise rarely invoked. Lù Tàibǎo also appears in Lǘshān texts of the Jiànyáng area (e.g. *Jiànyáng* 652.)

Taiwan."[5] Beyond these collections of invocations for temple and altar deities, used in conjunction with Spirit-medium performance, temple rites, and ritual processions, Dean and Zheng list many other liturgical texts for such Ritual Master rites as Rewarding of the Troops, and rites for expelling Killer-spirits 煞.[6] Additionally, Yè Míngshēng has published the United Altar 合壇 invocation of a Zhāngzhōu Ritual Master tradition which establishes direct continuity among the greater Taiwanese Minor Rite traditions and those of the Zhāngzhōu region.[7]

Among the extensive collections of Lűshān ritual texts published by Yè Míngshēng and John Lagerwey, given the different natures of these upland Lűshān traditions there is less of a liturgical reliance on the kinds of invocations which predominate in the traditions of the Mínnán littoral. However, such seven-character invocations are still quite numerous, and are often distributed throughout longer liturgical texts, though some smaller volumes of invocations also exist. Moreover, there are clear indications of exchange across regions, as several invocations used in the Táinán region are also found among the manuscripts of Lűshān altars in Lóngyán, including the formula for Summoning the Five Camps,[8] portions of a stanza for Guānyīn,[9] and a set of invocations for Chén Jìnggū and her sworn sisters (aka the Three Milk-maids 三奶夫人). Despite variant phrasing, these latter invocations for Ladies Chén, Lín and Lǐ are so similar that in both

[5] Dean and Zheng, , "Group initiation and exorcistic dance,"143.
[6] Ibid, For other titles interspersed among Daoist liturgical texts see Dean, *Taoism and Popular Religion in Southeast China*, 563-568.
[7] Yè Míngshēng,「試論"瑜伽教"之衍變及其世俗化事像」, 264.
[8] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:180.
[9] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:162.

Táinán and Lóngyán manuscripts, the well-known ancestral homeplace of Chén Jìnggū is written incorrectly.[10]

Based on the widespread distribution of such invocation manuscripts and other, related ritual texts, as well as the many shared symbolic and literary conventions common to both these invocations and related texts of the Míng Daoist Canon, it appears likely that the texts of the Minor Rite tradition, its kin and progenitors have been written down and transmitted in textual form for centuries.

The Minor Rite Texts: An Overview

The invocations 咒語 themselves are relatively short, individual texts, averaging roughly eight to ten lines of (primarily) 7 syllable couplets, and are used to summon spirits, individually and in groups, into the altar-space. Most Minor Rite altars record their collection of these basic invocations in one or more volumes 咒簿(jiew poŭ) that almost always begin by presenting the invocations in the order in which they are used in their standard ritual of Unfolding the Altar 羅壇 (luh duāĥ), aka Purification of the Altar 清壇(chinng duāĥ) and Invitation of the Spirits 請神 (chiāh sheeń) –all names for the same rite which forms the most basic and most frequently performed Minor Rite ceremony. Thus not unlike Daoist ritual texts, a Minor Rite altar's primary invocation book can be opened and –up to a point– recited from in order.

However, given the individual nature of the invocations, if an altar's main invocation book contains a large collection of invocations, such as the Chéngxīn Tán 誠心壇(CXT) folio, with 197

[10] Rather than the correct Gŭtián 古田 County, in Táinán-area manuscripts this is given as Pŭtián County 莆田縣, while in Lóngyán, these two characters 古 and 莆 have evidently been conflated to produce a 苦田縣 (Guăngjì Tán 2:220).

by my count,[11] and the Héshèng Táng 和勝堂 (HST) collection, with 89 in the main volume (HST 1),[12] and a grand total (in 6 volumes) of 178 different invocations,[13] the first several invocations are read in order, but after a certain point the sequence will begin to skip to particular invocations distributed throughout the text (usually between 20 and 30 individual invocations are sung in any given Invitation of the Spirits sequence). In the case of the Chéngxīn Tán volume, the first 30 or so are, for the most part, more relevant to a standard Invitation of the Spirits sequence. But the remainder of the volume is largely organized into groups according to types of deities, so that the collection is not a random assortment, but an ordered compendia, though the original manuscript has no titles, page numbers, or table of contents.[14] The Héshèng Táng collection, when re-copied by hand in the 1990's, was transcribed into thematic volumes which preserved the order of the now lost original manuscript, though with the benefit of titles to each invocation.

Many altars have more modest volumes which can, for the most part, be recited straight through,[15] but even with smaller collections, like those typically found in Ānpíng and many Pénghú altars, most invocation books tend to have more invocations than are routinely used, but are still ordered in general correspondence with ritual practice. As the rite of Summoning the Camps 調

[11] This total does not include the subsequent series of 35 formula mostly dealing with the Five Camps, which I have separately designated as DWY (Diào Wǔyíng 調五營).
[12] Here, due to the sequences of the book itself, 15 invocations dealing with the Five Camps, largely the same as those of the CXT DWY section, are included in this count, as are repeated invocations dealing with the Saints of the Five Camps. These repetitions are present precisely to facilitate sequential recitation from the book itself. See the numbered Tables of Content for exact titles and sequences.
[13] This count also excludes the repeated, five-directional formula for the Five Camps, as well as formula used in such rites as Presenting Cash to Supplement Fortune and other volumes, as well as other repeated invocations.
[14] See the CXT Table of Contents, which features the numbers and titles which I have added, as well as indications of the basic groupings, based on kinds of deities, by which the volume is broadly organized.
[15] Such as the two volumes from the Xīlái Ān 西來庵 , derived from the Jīn-ān Gōng transmission-lineage.

營 and its various components are also frequently performed, the invocations for these are usually included (towards the end) in any given altar's main invocation book.[16]

Aside from these individual invocations, most Minor Rite altars usually transmit a number of other rites, often in separate volumes. Many include some of the same invocations found in main invocation collections, and which often bookend or punctuate longer rites with specific purposes. Representative of these other ritual texts are:

Presenting Cash to Supplement Fortune 進錢補運, which includes the "Invocation of the Roads and Passes of the Earth Prefecture"地府路關咒[17]

Plucking Flowers and Changing the Bushel 栽花換斗(aka Entering the Flower Garden 入花園) (these two combined in HST 5)

Sacrifice to the Stars 祭星 (HST 6)

Sacrifice to the Killer-spirits 祭煞(HST 6; in the CXT folio, the invocations used follow those for Summoning the Camps in the DWY section).

Animation of Spirit-Images 開光. In many cases the formula for this procedure are included in separate volumes, as with HST 5, but appended by Ritual Master Lín to my copy of the CXT folio, along with a separate rite for the animation of the papier-mâché boat-hands 水手 placed on exorcistic Royal Boats used in the Royal Jiào.

Rewarding the Troops 犒賞 (HST 1; in my CXT folio, Ritual Master Lín also included a rite for Rewarding the 36 Official Generals. Additionally, Lín transmitted two separate texts, the Medium Rewarding of the Troops 中犒賞, and the Grand Rewarding of the Troops 大犒賞. Usually only the Medium version is routinely performed (e.g. at the Bǎo-ān Gōng 保安宮), with the Grand version formerly appearing only in conjunction with the Daoist Jiào. In Ānpíng, the Miàoshòu Gōng also practices two annual Grand Rewarding of the Troops, one at their temple and one at the Tiānhòu Gōng, each with their own liturgical manuscript.)

[16] This is also true of the CXT volume which was given to me by Lín Dòuzhī in 2011, but I have counted these separately, and are not among the 197 mentioned previously.

[17] The preferable text for this rite is that of the Ānpíng Miàoshòu Gōng 妙壽宮, which is more complete and extensive than those transmitted in altars of the Prefectural City proper.

In addition to these major rites, the formula for a number of other ritual procedures are also included in some of these collections, such as "Treading on Fire" 踏火 (HST 5:6), the Bushel Lantern 斗燈 (a fortune-boosting rite, also involving parts of HST 5) and an "Invocation for Healing Illness" 治病咒 (HST 5:11), among others. In most cases, a given Minor Rite altar will still perform their standard Invitation of the Spirits sequence before these longer rituals. In this chapter, I will primarily be discussing the individual invocations, rather than these other rites.

Finally, let me note that there are certain ritual formula which are only occasionally written down. This is the case with the invocations used in such common procedures as Gathering-in Shock 收驚 (shiew gyāȟ) and the Sacrifice to Remove [Affliction] 祭解 (tzei gài), which are in fact more likely to be orally transmitted, and as will be further discussed below, these oft-used formula contain some of the only, genuinely vernacular language found in the entire Minor Rite repertoire.[18]

In this study, I have made primary use of two different collections: the Chéngxīn Tán 誠心壇 (CXT) invocations, given to me by Ritual Master Lín Dòuzhī in 2011, and which represent the Bǎo-ān Gōng 保安宮 "Red-Headed," Xújiǎ 徐甲 tradition-group, and those of the Héshèng Táng 和勝堂 (HST), representative of the so-called Lǐ Fēng 李風 or Kāishān Wáng Mìao 開山王廟 transmission-lineage of the Black-Head 烏頭 Minor Rite tradition-group, and which I photographed when I began learning and performing the Minor Rite at the Héshèng Táng. While these two collections form the primary basis of my analysis, I have also compared these with other collections:

[18] The versions of these formula which I have studied and analyzed were written down from memory by Daoist High Priest Zhōng Ānghán (of the Shànhuà Daoist Altar), who, for the sake of teaching me and other students, wrote them out in 2016.

Ānpíng Miàoshòu Gōng 妙壽宮		Black-Head	Ānpíng /Lǐ Fēng
Ānpíng Wénzhū Diàn 文朱殿		Black-Head	Ānpíng /Lǐ Fēng
Jīn-ān Gōng	金安宮	Black-Head	Jīn-ān Gōng 金安宮
Xilái Ān	西來庵	Black-Head	Jīn-ān Gōng 金安宮
Héyí Táng	和意堂	Black-Head	Lían Jíchéng 連吉成
Pénghú Chìfàn Táo Gōng 赤樊桃宮		Pénghú	Lűshān lineage-group
Nánchǎng Shuǐmén Gōng 南廠水門宮		Red-Head	Bǎo-ān Gōng/Xújiǎ
Jiāyì Héxīng Tán 嘉義和興壇		Black-Head	Lǐ Fēng (縣城隍廟)
Zhānghuà Mào-èr Tán 彰化茅貳壇		Unknown	Unknown

In addition to these collections, I have also consulted the Zhānghuà-area invocations published by Liú Zhīwàn (1974), while beyond the greater Taiwanese tradition I have extensively read the Lűshān liturgical texts published by Yè Míngshēng and John Lagerwey, which represent substantially different manifestations of the Ritual Master tradition, but nonetheless feature numerous invocations comparable in form and symbolism with those of the Mínnán littoral. Moreover, comparing these two different regional traditions has helped necessitate and inform my broader analysis of the Ritual Method movement, including the relative distinctions between what I have called the Tantric-Popular and Daoist hemispheres of this historic movement, as well as a re-tooled notion of "hybridity" to better depict the close proximity of Lűshān symbols with those of the Daoist inner altar, as is common in upland Fújiàn, a condition which contrasts with the clearer stratification of Daoist and Ritual Method symbolism in the Mínnán littoral.

The Minor Rite Invocations: A Brief Synopsis

Of these more individual Minor Rite invocations, there are basically two kinds: those which summon groups of deities together, in a collective, subordinate pantheon, and those which primarily summon one main deity, though these too often include further subordinate deities attached to the main god addressed in the invocation. The collective invocations by their nature

tend to include more Tantric-oriented deities, while those dedicated to certain main gods or spirits have multiplied so that most deities worshipped in the community have their own invocations, as do a large number of Prime Marshals and other deities included in other pantheon-groups, such as the 36 Official Generals.[19]

As certain spirits and Ancestral Masters of the Tantric-Popular Ritual Method have become widely integrated into the Taiwanese (and Mínnán) temple cult, it would be an oversimplification to distinguish invocations to temple-deities on the one hand, and deities of the Ritual Master's altar-system on the other. Yet such a distinction is not entirely without merit, for aside from a few important exceptions, like Bǎoshēng Dàdì and Qīngshuǐ Zǔshī, who have become portrayed and invoked as Ancestral Masters of the Ritual Master tradition, most (if far from all) of the deities associated with the Ritual Master's own heavily accretionist altar-system are subordinate deities in the temple, as opposed to the main deities who preside over them.

Furthermore, by comparing different invocation collections, it becomes clear that invocations associated with the Ritual Master's own altar, including those of the Five Camps, major subordinate pantheons, and certain Ancestral Masters are broadly the same across the entire tradition, from Pénghú to southern Táiwān, and even into Lóngyán. Invocations for temple deities, however, are often unrelated when compared across different tradition-groups, though within tradition-groups and their component transmission-lineages, invocations for these temple deities tend to be cognate. These patterns argue that the invocations for the Ritual Master's altar are

[19] E.g. CXT 158-184 are all individual invocations for certain members of one such configuration of the 36 Official Generals pantheon.

earlier, while the invocations for temple deities were composed later and independently as the need arose; indeed, the composition of invocations for temple gods is ongoing.

These most widely distributed invocations, which likely constitute an earlier stratum of the tradition, and which are primarily concerned with central elements of the Minor Rite altar-system are as follows:[20]

Primary altar-pantheons, with prominent Three Altars and Tantric symbolism:

The United Altar 合壇 (ha̍p duāha̍) HST 1:2, CXT 11, and CXT 24 (the "Long Version")
The Root Altar 本壇大將 (bu͘n duāha̍) CXT 22 , HST 1:6, with Bǎoshēng Dàdì 保生大帝 as Lord-of-the-Rite, as is common to most Black-Head tradition-group altars.
The 36 Official Generals 三十六官將（三壇官將）CXT 58, HST 1:38

The "Four Grand Generals" 四大將 Seize 捉, Bind 縛, Cangue 枷, and Lock 鎖, among the oldest group of Ritual Method symbols common to both Daoist and Tantric-Popular pantheons, and part of the Mínnán-Taiwanese 36 Official Generals :

Grand General Seize (Jioa̍h) 捉大將 HST 4:28, CXT 168 捉鬼大將
Grand General Bind (Baa̍h) 縛大將 HST 4:29, CXT 169 縛鬼大將
Grand General Cangue (Gyâ) 枷大將 HST 4:30, CXT 170 枷鬼大將
Grand General Lock (Suha̍)鎖大將 HST 4:31, CXT 171 鎖鬼大將[21]

The invocation for Grand General Black Flag 黑旗大將軍, the talismanic flag of Xuántiān Shàngdi, which is enshrined in most temples in the region:
HST 3:4 七星黑旗金道長, CXT 7 金毛道長 (黑旗大將軍)

Invocations of the Five Camps 五營 (gnōh yiāha̍) including the five invocations for each of the Holy Ones, or Saints 聖者:

[20] I provide here references to the CXT and HST collections, though my comparison identifying these invocations has made reference to the other collections mentioned above.
[21] CXT 170 and CXT 171 contain a few variant phrases, but the texts are otherwise cognate.

Saint Zhāng(Diõ̍) 張聖者神咒 HST 1:49, CXT 153
Saint Xiāo(Siaû) 蕭聖者神咒 HST 1:50, CXT 154
Saint Liú (Laú) 劉聖者神咒 HST 1:51, CXT 155
Saint Lián (Leń) 連聖者神咒 HST 1:52, CXT 156
Prime Marshal Nuózhà (Ṭuh-Chiâ)
哪吒元帥(of the 33rd Heaven) 三十三天神
HST 1:53, CXT 157
As well as the Summoning of the Camps 調營 stanzas:
HST 1:62-66, CXT DWY 1-5
And those subsequently used for Binding-up the Altar-space 結界:
HST 1:62-66, CXT DWY 21-25

Invocations for the deity Nuózhà 哪吒 (Ṭuh-Chiâ) i.e. the Third Prince 三太子:
Third Prince Ṭuh-Chiâ 哪吒太子 HST 1:7, CXT 68[22]
Prime Marshal Ṭuh-Chiâ 哪吒元帥 HST 1:38, CXT 140

Invocations for the great Lűshān Ancestral Matriarchs Madame Línshuǐ 臨水夫人 and the Three Madame Milk-maids 三奶夫人, variant editions of which are also found in Lűshān manuscripts in Lóngyán.[23] In Táinán, the same content is shared among different invocations:

Madame Línshuǐ 臨水夫人 HST 1:26, with content identical to
Lín-nǎi Fūrén 林奶夫人 CXT 30 , and
Madame Milkmaid Lǐ 李奶夫人 CXT 31
Madame Milkmaid Chén 陳奶夫人 HST 1:27, CXT 29 陳奶夫人[24]

[22] The last several lines of CXT 68 feature two lines not seen in HST 1:7, while variant characters ambound.
[23] *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:220-221.
[24] The HST collection does not have separate invocations for Madame Milkmaid Lín 林奶夫人 and Madame Milkmaid Lǐ 李奶夫人, though as noted the content of these invocations as they appear in the CXT collection has been incorporated into HST 1:26 Madame Línshuǐ 臨水夫人. The invocations for Madam Cài (Tsuǎ) 蔡氏夫人 in CXT 45 and HST 1:28 are different, though both make reference to her title Lord of Mercy 恩主蔡夫人, and both state that in her thirties she went to study Ritual Method 學法. HST 2a: 夫人三十去學法; CXT 2a: 三十二歲去學法. Also, CXT 45 6a-b bears language found in the Lady Mother 娘媽 invocation: 一爐香火通三界，援起金針插爐前, language which originated (evidently) in an invocation for Third Lady Lǐ 李三娘 (see discussion below). The most interesting feature of this HST 1:29 蔡氏夫人 text is the subordinate pantheon of five directional generals: 東方將軍楊相公、南方靈符張使者、西方將軍何文貴、北方將軍陳桂先、中央將軍黃有明. In the Building a Bridge to Cross Adversity 造橋過限 ritual performed by the Héshèng Táng and Pǔjì Diàn (lineage descendants of Ritual Master Óng Lo̍k 王嗀), these five are invoked and represented

Invocations for the so-called Female Five Camps 女五營, a group of four Immortal Ladies 仙姑,with the Dark Lady of the Ninth Heaven usually regarded as the fifth:

Immortal Lady Qín (Keeń)勤氏仙姑	HST 1:31 CXT 41
Immortal Lady Hé (Huĺ)何氏仙姑	HST 1:32 CXT 42
Immortal Lady Lǐ(Leè)李氏仙姑	HST 1:33 CXT 43
Immortal Lady Jì (Geè) 紀氏仙姑	HST 1:34 CXT 44
Mysterious Woman of the Ninth Heaven 九天玄女	HST 1:36 CXT 37

Invocations to major Ritual Method spirits and other altar deities:

Lóngshù Wáng	龍樹王	HST 2:48, CXT 12
Xúantiān Shàngdi	玄天上帝	HST 1:5 CXT143
General Black Killer of the North	北方黑煞將	HST 1:79, CXT 147[25]
General Black Tiger 黑虎將		HST 1:22, CXT 136
Saint Snowy Mountain 雪山大聖		HST 2:55，CXT 57
Dōng-zhōng Tàiyī Jūn 洞中太乙君[26]		HST 1:56，CXT 194
Immortal Official Huáng 黃仙官		HST 2:53, CXT 180

The Táinán-area "Opening Invocation" 咒頭 known as the Jade Void 玉虛, based on an invocation for Pǔhuà Tiānzūn in the Daoist Scripture of the Jade Pivot 玉樞經[27]
HST 1:1, CXT 1 (玉符)

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with five altars surrounding the bridge. There is a separate invocation for 黃有明 near the end of the main collection 1:88.

[25] CXT 147 北方黑煞 shares many of the same lines and phrases with HST 1:79, but in shuffled order. Both violate the typical head-to-toe, left-to-right order typical of the iconographic language protocol. The CXT 147 text does not identify Hēishà as 玄天上帝, as the HST source does. However, CXT 13 玄天上帝 also shares a large proportion of lines with the HST 黑煞 incantation. Indeed, these three –the two CXT sources and the HST text are all composed from nearly the same phrases, though in recombinant orders.

[26] This invocation may be tangentially related to the historic 7-character invocation found in juàn 25 of the Yùtáng Dàfǎ, which counts among some of the earliest 7-character invocations which exhibit substantial features of the distinctive Ritual Method invocation genre. See discussion of these historical backgrounds below.

[27] 九天應元雷聲普化天尊玉樞寶經， ZHDZ 31:300. I have not seen this Jade Void invocation in available sources from Pénghú or Zhānghuà, and appears to be unique to Táinán-area traditions. As I have shown elsewhere this material and the iconography of Pǔhuà Tiānzūn was used as the basis for the cult of Xújiǎ Zhēnrén at the Bǎo-ān Gōng, the home of the Xújiǎ tradition-group in Táinán.

The Tainan "Invocation Closure" 咒尾

Prime Marshal Ōng-suñ 王孫元帥 HST 1:22, CXT 137.

And the widely-distributed invocation mostly connected with Māzǔ, but in fact derived from a Fujianese stanza invoking Third Lady Lǐ 李三娘 (of the Three Milk-maids 三奶):

Lady Mother 娘媽 (娓娘媽) HST 1:36, CXT 38 天上聖母

Also, invocations for these important deities:

Buddha-Ancestor Guānyīn 觀音佛祖 HST 1:25, CXT 34,
Parts found in Lóngyán (*Guǎngjì Tán* 2:162)

The Holy King who Opened Táiwān 開台聖王 (Koxinga)
HST 1:4, CXT 126

Māzǔ 媽祖 (Holy Mother in Heaven 天上聖母/ Empress of Heaven)
HST 1:24, CXT 40 天后聖母

Gǔangzé Zūnwáng 保安廣澤尊王 HST 1:12, CXT 134 保安尊王 (1)

Prefectural and County City Gods HST 2:50, CXT 27 府縣城隍[28]

The Earth God 福德正神 HST 1:19, CXT 83 土地公公[29]

The Stove God 司命灶君 HST 4:9, CXT 25

Other widely distributed invocations not found in the Chéngxīn Tán collection include these two for major Ritual Method Ancestral Masters:

Lűshān Holy Ancestor 閭山聖祖 HST 2:6
(Ānpíng, Pénghú, Zhānghuà)

Grand Master of the Religion Pǔ-ān 普庵大教主
(two versions): HST 2:19, HST 2:20
(Táinán, Ānpíng, Pénghú)

Thus we have roughly forty invocations, including several repeated formula, mostly concerned with the Ritual Master's own altar and tradition, which are common to both of these large

[28] Of interest here is the opening of HST 2:50, which is written with small characters offering variability as to which City God is being invoked, including not only the Prefectural and County 府縣 City Gods, but that of Jiuh Saî 石獅, a city south of Quánzhōu and historically administered under Jìnjiāng County 晉江縣. Minor differences of phrasing appear in the HST and CXT sources.

[29] The 2nd line of CXT differs.

invocation collections, and in most cases[30] shared by the others consulted in this study as well. Moreover, most of these widely shared stanzas are still the most frequently and universally used invocations in Minor Rite performance. In Táinán-area traditions, these invocations still provide the framework of ritual itself (after the Opening of the Altar 開壇 formula), as ritual is typically commenced from either the United Altar or 36 Official Generals, and then concluded with either Ōng Suñ 王孫 or Prime Marshal Ŀuh-Chiâ 哪吒. Many other invocations appear in virtually every ritual performance: the Root Altar, Xuántiān Shàngdì, Lóngshù Wáng (in the Bǎo-ān Gōng/Xújiǎ tradition-group), the Third Prince, General Black Tiger, Lady Mother, Línshuǐ Fūrén, the Female Five Camps.

Aside from this common core, however, the other one-hundred-plus invocations to various temple gods and other deities tend to differ across tradition-groups, with invocations to the same gods usually unrelated, and in many cases simply unique, though occasionally invocations to the same god do share one or two couplets or a mixture of similar phrases, but otherwise differ completely.[31] Hence it appears that while the shared invocations concerned with the Ritual Master's altar constitute an earlier core of a broader tradition, the majority of invocations for various temple deities evolved later and separately. Moreover, the development and circulation of these temple-god invocations largely follow the contours of what I have labeled tradition-groups,

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[30] For example, smaller collections lack individual invocations for the Four Grand Generals Seize, Bind, Cangue, and Lock, while they still appear in the 36 General Officials invocation.

[31] For example, in the invocations for the Lady Who Records Births 註生娘媽, there is shared language, but not direct correspondence. In both HST 1:30 and CXT 36, lines 1b contain the iconographic phrase 手執玉筆, while other shared language is found in HST 2b and CXT 3b 降落凡間, but in both cases the following three-character phrases are different. A further parallel is found in HST 5a-b: 雖見世間多生育, 立在血湖救產生; and CXT 4a-b: 為見世間傳生育, 入在血湖救產人. Furthermore, in CXT 5b we have 是男是女註定分, similar to HST 1b 手執玉筆定男女. CXT 7a-b also invokes subordinate pantheons: 三十六宮乳母娘, 七十二院巡花婆, a reference absent from the HST text. Such parallels suggest deliberate variation of a common source, in order to produce a distinctive text copied from another.

as most of the invocations circulating in the Héshèng Táng collection are found in the books of other Black-Head altars,[32] while the Chéngxīn Tán, representing the so-called Red-Headed, Bǎo-ān Gōng/Xújiǎ tradition-group, features invocations for temple gods which differ from those of the Black-Head tradition-group. Similarly, most Pénghú invocations for Wángye deities and other gods also differ from those in Táinán, while the broadly-shared invocations identified above are again essentially the same.

Importantly, this core group of shared invocations includes the subordinate pantheons which have become integrated into the structure of the temple-cult: the Five Camps, the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar (Third Prince Lǐ Nuózhà), and the 36 Official Generals, as well as General Black Tiger, who, as Prime Marshal of the Lower Altar, is universally identified with Sire Tiger 虎爺, and is worshipped in every temple, including Qīng "Official Temples" 官廟 that pointedly lack the other Ritual Method pantheons. Perhaps because of their membership in the 36 Official Generals pantheon, the Four Grand Generals Seize, Bind, Cangue, and Lock, who frequently appear in Ritual Method texts of the Daoist Canon (often with "Torture" 拷/考 in place of Lock), are often given physical representation in temples, with miniature wooden devices representing these four hung beside altars, though only rarely fitted with incense-receptacles indicating spiritual sentience. Similarly the invocation for the talismanic Black Flag of Xuántiān Shàngdì is among those shared across traditions, while the Black Flag has become a near-universal fixture of most temples across the region, though the style of Black Flag used in the Prefectural

[32] The temple-deity invocations of the Lín Jíchéng/Héyì Táng transmission-lineage often differ from those shared by the other two Táinán-area Black-Head transmission-lineages (including Ānpíng), which is yet another factor suggesting the Lián Jíchéng tradition either received transmission from an independent source, or was largely created anew from recombination and innovation in Japanese-era Táinán.

City and Ānpíng is distinctive, and as with its Minor Rite traditions, the Táinán-style Black Flag appears to derive from the Xiàmén and Tóngān areas.

Hence these basic, shared invocations not only constitute an earlier core stratum of the tradition, to this day they still form the primary framework of ritual performance, to which various temple deities, particular to the home temples of each Minor Rite altar are added, usually in the middle of the Invitation of the Spirits, thus making a broader tradition adaptable to specific temples and altars.

While the invocations to most temple deities appear to be later, with their composition and redaction a highly diffuse process, most invocations have been composed according to a broad template that employs linguistic techniques visible not only in Sòng-Yuán-Míng Daoist texts of Ritual Method, while further incorporating content that expresses the symbolism, ideology and practice of the Common Religion itself.

Anatomy of a Minor Rite Invocation

A couple of examples will help illustrate important features of the Minor Rite invocation genre. First, let us examine one of these more widely shared and historic invocations, the most common of several for the ancient Ritual Method deity, Xuántiān Shàngdì:

I reverently summon the Supreme Lord of Dark Heaven,
Bright Ren-guǐ water flag of the celestial North Pole,
Honored with authorized command as the Real Lord, and called the Real Warrior,
Mightily guarding the North Pole, manifesting his real form.
Hair loosened around his head, rising into the sky,
The Black Flag unfurls, ghosts and gods are stunned.
Left hand holding a jeweled sword beheading fiendish spirits,
Right hand holding a decree of authorized command, saving the common people.
On the left is the brave hero Marshal Kāng,
On the right is the Good and Loyal Marshal Zhào.
The Celestial Tortoise and the Red Serpent face the Real Warrior,
The Six Dīng and Six Jiǎ spirits follow on the left and right.
My ritual method is the Rén-guǐ water of the north,
Seize and send [them] to the fire-spirit of the south.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Supreme Lord of Dark Heaven swiftly descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

玄天上帝

謹請玄天上帝爺　　北極壬癸水明旗
敕奉真君號真武　　威鎮北極展真行
披頭散髮騰空起　　黑旗展起鬼神驚
左手寶劍斬妖精　　右手勅旨救萬民
左有英勇康元帥　　友有忠良趙玄壇
蒼龜赤蛇朝真武　　六丁六甲左右隨
吾法北方壬癸水　　押去南方火精神
弟子壇前專拜請　　玄天上帝速降臨
火急如律令

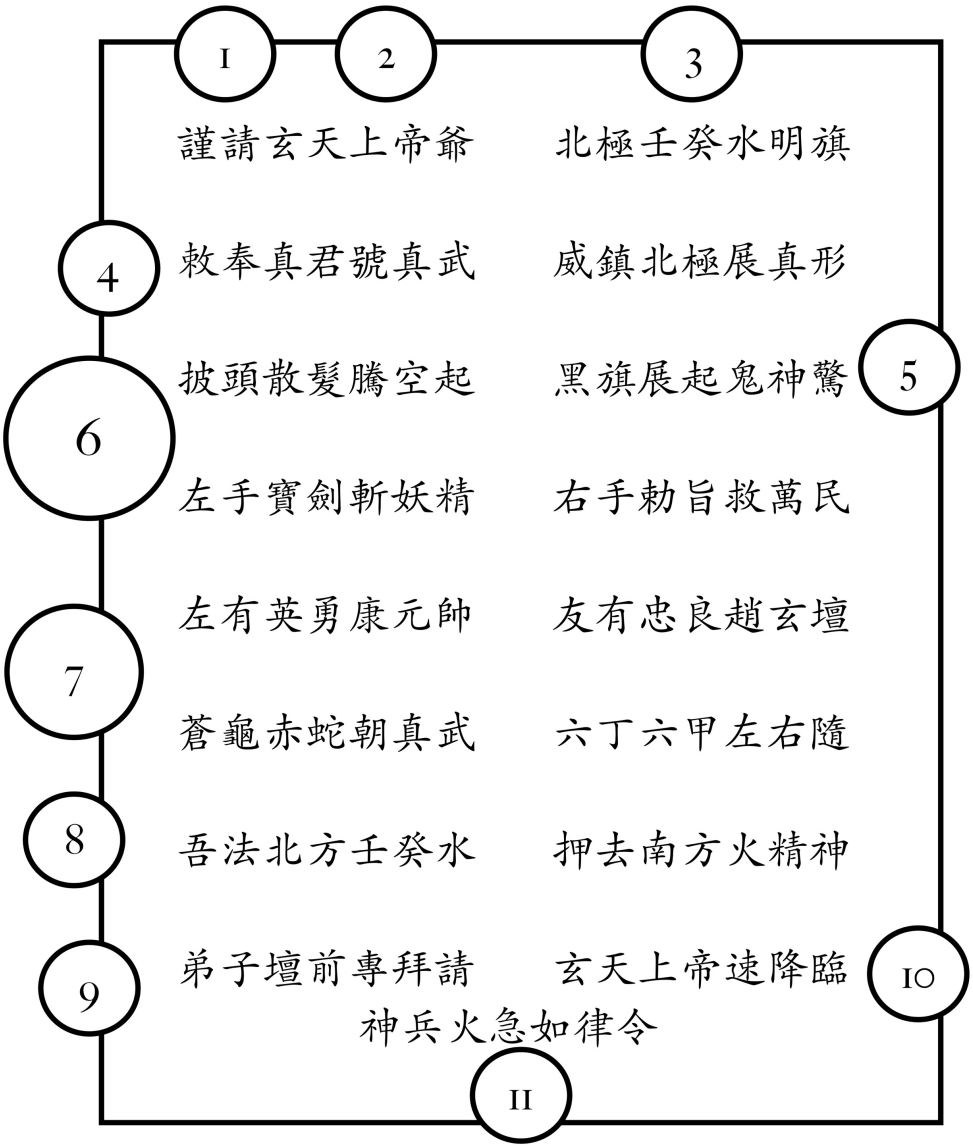

Figure 3.1 Diagram of Invocation for Xuántiān Shàngdì HST 1:5 玄天上帝

1. Opening two-character phrase of summons (謹請, 拜請, 仰啟, sometimes 奉請)
2. Name or title of the deity
3. Associated symbolism and general attributes
4. Authorization, usually from the Jade Emperor
5. Ritual and spiritual actions
6. Iconographic depictions of the deity, together with spiritual and violent actions
7. Subordinate pantheons
8. First-person language, where the text speaks in the voice of the deity
9. Penultimate closing couplet, particular to specific tradition or lineage-groups
10. Command of summons
11. Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

First is the opening phrase of summons (1), which among Taiwanese traditions often varies according to specific tradition-groups, or, in some cases, with different melodies. Here, "reverently summon 謹請 (gīm chiãh , or gīm chinnǹ in Ānpíng) marks this as text of the Black-Head tradition-group, while the so-called Red-Headed Bǎo-ān Gōng tradition-group has "in worship I summon" 拜請 (ba chiãh).[33] The phrase "[I] raise my head to summon" 仰啟 (ỳong keì) is less common in Minor Rite collections than in canonical Daoist invocations, but still appears in essentially every Táinán-area performance of Black-Head Minor Rite. These opening characters, followed by the name or title of the deity (2), as well as the last line and final command of "spirit-soldiers" are all fixtures of the genre that frame the text within a well-defined structure, and which pronounce the formal commands that name and summon the deity or deities in question.

Aside from this standard framework, which bookends each invocation within ritual commands, there is no fixed sequence of content to the invocations per se, but there are very consistent patterns nonetheless, most of which are exemplified here. In this case, after the opening which summons and names the deity, there follow his associated symbolism and general attributes (3), though frequently this and other "b" couplets sometimes feature what might be called filler.[34] Of utmost importance and nearly universal are statements declaring the authorization of the deity, almost always by the Jade Emperor,[35] but occasionally by other figures of the Daoist altar,

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[33] At the Héshèng Táng, when using the "Celebration of Longevity" 祝壽 melody, the phrase 謹請 is changed to 拜請 to better fit the cadence of the melody. The Héyì Táng, on account of their long interaction with the nearby Bǎo-ān Gōng will also selectively switch to 拜請 , and occasionally use the Red-Headed melody as well. In the CXT collections, perhaps because the character 且 is easier to write than 請, this Mínnán homophone is used throughout all of Lín Dòuzhī's ritual manuscripts.

[34] Most representative are variations of the phrase "His name is raised under Heaven and across the Four Seas 名揚四海天下揚, e.g. HST 1:4, 1:9, 2:4, 2:51; CXT 98, 101, 107, 126.

[35] E.g. HST 1:8, 1:9, 1:10,1:15,1:23,1:1:30, 1:31, 2:4; CXT 4, 14, 25, 36, 39, 40, 45, 46, 47, 62, 66, 74, 75, 76, 77, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 95, 98, 100, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 113, 114, 123, 124, 127, 137, 144, 145, 147, 151, 152, 158, 159, 161, 162, 165, 166, 169, 170, 175, 181, 182, 187, 195, 196, 197.

including the deified Láozi, Lǎojūn,[36] and Celestial Master Zhāng.[37] Only in the rarest of instances is the imperial house named as the source of a god's authorization.[38] In some cases, specific ties of associated symbolism are employed in such authorization, as with General Black Flag 黑旗將軍, the talismanic flag (5) of Xuántiān Shàngdì prominently featured in this stanza. In the separate invocation for General Black Flag (who is said in the invocations to have personally authorized the spirit of this ubiquitous (and animated) spiritual implement.[39] Here the invocation declares that "ghosts and gods are stunned" when the Black Flag is unfurled. This is a reference not so much to the spiritual or symbolic actions of the deity, but to the actual, physical flag that every Táinán-area Minor Rite troupe venerates as part of its cultic assembly. In ritual processions, particularly exorcistic patrols by spirit-possessed sedans, but whenever Minor Rite troupes join in a procession, the Black Flag is always carried, with burning incense clasped in the receptacle fastened to the tip of the flag-pole. Hence this reference to the Black Flag is not an allusion to the god's mythic past, nor merely a general reference to his iconic symbolism, but to concrete ritual acts performed by Ritual Masters and Minor Rite troupes.

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[36] E.g. HST 2:51 東嶽大帝: 身授老君親敕令, 執掌十八重地獄； CXT 32 朱姑娘媽: 老君賜吾統天兵; CXT 55 鐵公將軍: 太上老君親敕令, 壇前作法鬧紛々; CXT 61 閻山許真人: 傳授老君親敕令, 降下炉山傳法人.

[37] E.g. CXT 27 府縣城隍: 吾是天師親敕令, 敕封城隍真顯現, and by direct identification: HST 1:21 玄壇元帥, 吾是天師降行法, HST 1:22 黑虎將軍, 我是天師法. In CXT 62 張府天師 , the Celestial Master is also said to be personally authorized by the Jade Emperor: 玉皇有親旨勅降, as are the Three Officials, Grand Emperors 三官大帝 (CXT 196): 身受玉皇上帝勅.

[38] In these major collections, of routinely used invocations, only the HST invocation for Māzǔ (HST 1:25 天上聖母) mentions the imperial house granting Māzǔ her title of "Empress of Heaven," 天后, and the invocation reads "Returning in victory to the Imperial Court, with renown for merit, the Emperor bestowed authorized command to give thanks for the Mother's grace" 得騰回朝有功名, 皇帝敕賜謝娘恩. But interestingly this is directly connected to the history of Táinán, Shī Láng's conquest of Táiwān in 1683, and the subsequent conversion of the Southern Míng Prince of Níngjìng's 寧靖王 palace into the Grand Temple of the Empress of Heaven 大天后宮.

[39] CXT 7 金毛道長 (黑旗大將軍): 身受玄天上帝勅.

A definitive feature of all Ritual Method invocations is the kind of iconographic language (6) seen here, which not only depicts the god visually, but more importantly as embodied. As embodied beings, the gods wield weapons, with which they slay similarly embodied spiritual entities, from the "fiendish spirits" 妖精 mentioned here, to "unorthodox spirits" 不正神[40], "perverse demons" 邪魔,[41] and the demonic dead 鬼.[42] The embodied nature of these spiritual entities is central to the premises whereby Ritual Method traditions construct their efficacy, and this paradigm of embodiment is consistently portrayed throughout Ritual Method texts, as epitomized by the deification of those instruments of official bondage, Seize, Bind, Cangue, and Lock. This principle is further elaborated in the Ritual Method legal codes of the Daoist Canon, which, like those found in the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*,[43] prescribe corporal punishment ranging from exile, flogging, and torture by needling 針决, to (most commonly) dismemberment 分形, execution 處斬, and ultimately, extinction of [bodily] form 滅形 for spirits who violate the legal statues that regulate the enchanted social order, and underpin ritual efficacy.[44] To this we may add the common ritual techniques involving symbolic traps 罩, prisons 獄, and wells 井, used throughout Ritual Method compendia like the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán,* to ensnare and restrain pathogenic spirits.

In this embodied paradigm of coercive ritual power, ultimately it is the spirit-soldiers (11) and other low-status henchmen who are primarily depicted as applying compulsive violence on the

[40] E.g. CXT 4, 6, 19, 22, 46, 56, 74, 75, 91, 92, 100, 102, 114, 124, 144, 158, 159, 166, 168, 182.
[41] E.g. CXT 52 高靈大將: 手執月斧斬邪魔, also CXT 19, 21, 33, 66, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76.
[42] E.g. CXT 59, 60,62, 64, 68, 76, and throughout.
[43] Chapters 55, as well as 251-252 all feature such corporal punishment as the means of enforcing order on the spirit-world.
[44] See DFHY 251-2, ZHDZ 38:404-423.

bodies of spiritual malefactors, and so these lowly but indispensable spirit-soldiers receive considerable attention in the invocations and the ritual life of every temple.

This delegation of spiritual power is further expressed in the subordinate pantheons (7) frequently included in the invocations. Moreover, the stanzas frequently reflect the fundamental aesthetics of the religion, in which most deities are always enshrined with the images of their subordinates at their sides, thus forming a symmetrical installation, as described in the stanza here. In the Héshèng Táng invocation for Guānyīn (HST 1:24), a whole panoply of subordinate pantheons proper to a Buddhist temple or monastery are depicted in realistic spatial assignments, from the Four Heavenly Kings guarding the gate, and the Eighteen Arhats lining the sides, to the dharma-protector Wéitúo 韋陀 (Skanda) "standing precisely in the center," just as he is usually enshrined, along the temple's central axis.

Another central feature of Ritual Method texts is the frequent use of first-person language in the liturgy (8), whereby the Ritual Master speaks in the voice of the god. This technique forms part of the ritual complex I have called liturgical identification, in which Ritual Masters employ ritual formula and bodily practices of resemblance to impersonate their empowering deities. Such language can be found in Ritual Method invocations of every kind, and frequently occur in the Minor Rite genre.[45] While in a large number of invocations, the first-person pronoun 吾 (gnõh) refers to the deity, in many other instances, it refers to the Ritual Master. The interplay of these

[45] E.g. CXT 6, 7, 15, 27, 32, 36, 37, 42, 44, 45, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 74, 75, 80, 81, 84, 85, 86, 88, 90, 93, 95, 97, 106, 108, 116, 121, 122, 123, 126, 129, 132, 135, 143, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, 152, 153, 159, 160, 165, 166, 167, 171, 173, 174, 176,177, 178, 179, 180, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 196. In all of these invocations cited here, the first-person pronoun 吾 (gnõh) refers to the deity. Other instances appearing in CXT either refer to the Ritual Master, or are ambiguous.

two possible referents likewise intensifies the premise of liturgical identification, in which "I" means both the Ritual Master and the deity.

In this invocation, while Xuántiān Shàngdì slays fiendish spirits with his left hand, in his right he wields an "authorized command, saving the common people." This is likely a reference to the god forming his iconic, one-handed mudra, which the Chéngxīn Tán version makes explicit with both a variant, homophonous character for mudra,[46] but also by reversing the normal left-right sequence, so that it is his left hand, as with his spirit-images, that forms the mudra.[47] In the invocation genre, this left-right symmetry of the deity's spiritual actions often involves exorcistic violence on one hand, and salvific or purifying actions on the other, most notably the sprinkling of talisman-water. This image of a sword in one hand and a cup of talisman-water in the other is of course another iconic image of the Ritual Master –including his Daoist counterpart, and is frequently depicted in the iconography of spirit-images.[48]

These basic principles are illustrated in another of the more widely shared invocations, this time for Immortal Lady Hé, one of the Four Immortal Ladies who, together with the Mysterious Woman of the Ninth Heaven, are often enshrined and invoked as the Female Five Camps. Like the above invocation for Xuántiān Shàngdì, this one for Immortal Lady Hé and all the Four Immortal Ladies are sung in essentially every ritual performance of the Black-Head tradition

[46] CXT 143: 左手執指救萬民. The character 指 is the primary word used to indicate mudras, including in the spoken language, while 訣 is more common in Daoist texts.
[47] CXT 143.
[48] For example, CXT 151 保生大帝 (王吳真君): 靈符寶劍收魔鬼，七盂符水盡消災; CXT 121 121 玉皇教主: 左手執劍斬妖精，右手勅水救萬民

group, which features a dedicated set of goddess invocations as a fixture of the Purification of the Altar ceremony.[49]

Female doctor of the Upper Realm, Immortal Lady Hé,[50]
[From] heaven above dispatched to come and guard the temple door.
On [her] head wearing a golden crown and a cap of flowers,[51]
[Her] feet stepping on the Seven Stars and the Wheel of the Three Realms.
Left hand holding a sword, slaying fiendish spirits,
Right hand [holding] talisman-water to rescue women.
I shout one sound, Sire Thunder resounds,
I shout one sound [and] enter the earth-wheel.
[I] destroy the [chthonic] realms of the three roads and the mountains of the Nine Prefectures,
[I] stand in the Lake of Blood and save women.
Destroying filth, rescuing childbirth, I am above,
Removing adversity, rescuing from difficulty, I am in front.
Saving all the myriad living beings with the power of Yīn and Yáng,
Urgently summon the Six [spirits] and immediately manifest bodily [form].[52]
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Immortal Lady Hé personally descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

HST 1:33 何氏仙姑[53]

上界女醫何仙姑　　上天差來鎮廟門
頭上金冠及花界　　腳踏七星三界輪
左手執劍斬妖精　　右手符水救女人
吾喝一聲雷公响　　吾喝一聲入地輪
破界三途九州岳　　立在血湖救產難

[49] In the Red-Headed Bǎo-ān Gōng tradition-group of CXT, the standard Purification of the Altar/Invitation of Spirits uses CXT 13 玄天上帝, a different invocation which still features iconographic and first-person language.

[50] In the HST text, the two-character opening summons are unusually elided in this series of goddess invocations, so as to preserve the symmetry of the first couplet as written. While CXT, in place of "upper realm" 上界 has its standard "in worship I summon" 拜請, Ānpíng altars add the standard Black-Head "reverently summon" 謹請 to the couplet, which is accommodated by crowding smaller characters together. The HST goddess invocations have been written this way probably so as to better fit the cadence of the HST goddess invocation melody, which differs slightly from that used in Ānpíng.

[51] Following CXT 42 reading 蓋 for the Mínnan homophone 界 (both pronounced gaǐ)

[52] The identity of these six spirits is unclear, but Ānpíng sources read "six sisters" 六姐, with "sisters" 姐 a Mínnán homophone of 者 (jià). This would seem to indicate a subordinate pantheon of "Elder Aunties"婆姐, which frequently accompany goddesses, such as the 36 Elder Aunties enshrined in many Línshuǐ Fūrén temples. CXT 42 reads "urgently summon the emissaries 急召使者.

[53] Cognate with CXT 42 何氏仙姑.

破穢救產吾在上　　解厄救難吾在前
救盡眾生陰陽德　　急召六者即現身
弟子壇前專拜請　　何氏仙姑親降臨
神兵火急如律令

This invocation, representative in many ways of the genre as a whole, presents Immortal Lady Hé as a potent ritual expert performing the spiritual dimensions of ritual actions, in her case those for women facing difficult childbirth 難產, a specialty emphasized in each invocation of the Four Immortal Ladies, all of whom are called "female physicians" 醫.[54] Here we have a fuller, head-to-toe version of iconographic description, plus several lines of first-person language, in which the goddess affirms her ritual power and her reassuring immanence during rites for women in the grips of birth trauma. This stanza also mentions subordinate spirits, probably the "Elder-Aunty" 婆姐 type often worshiped in goddess cults. Notably, the invocation leads by referencing the goddess' frequent role as "guardian of the temple door," as Immortal Lady Hé is often engraved or painted beside temple doors, or in some cases as a female Door God. Thus, we again see how the invocations frequently reflect the spatial and material representations of deities and spirit-images as they appear in temples. Thus like most in the Minor Rite genre, this invocation is a performative ritual text which primarily depicts a spiritualized image of ritual performance.

An invocation for one of the Bǎo-ān Gōng's main deities, Chí 池 (Deé) Wángye exemplifies how depictions of ritual performance and religious practice form central themes in the invocation genre, together with the other central elements seen so far:

I bow to summon His Highness Lord Chí,
[His] feet stepping on the Seven Stars and a Five Thunders Cloud.
[His] hand holds an iron whip, shaking Heaven and Earth,

[54] HST 1:32-35, HST 1:35 紀氏仙姑 and corresponding Ānpíng texts have the homophone 乙 instead of 醫. CXT 41-44 lack the titles "female physician" because of the aforementioned attachment of the 拜請 opening summons.

The Jade Emperor personally granted Me [authority] to guard Heaven's gate.
Disciples reverently summon, and first open the altar,
I see and descend to the altar.
All the disciples come to beseech [me],
Come before the altar, burn incense, and in worship summon.
[I] swear an oath to aid [my] disciples,
This day [I] descend to the altar to aid the common people.
Disciples of the Ritual school, in concentration bow to summon,
His Highness Lord Chí swiftly descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

CXT 88 池府千歲

拜請池府千歲爺　　腳踏七星五雷雲
手執鐵鞭天地動　　玉皇賜吾把天門
弟子謹請先開壇　　為吾見過下壇來
列位弟子有來求　　焚香拜請到壇前[55]
口愿發出救弟子　　今日下壇救萬民
法門弟子專拜請　　池府千歲降臨來

Here the stanza depicts a Spirit-medium séance, and includes both the human, ritual dimension of "opening an altar" – a Minor Rite performance to summon the deity, and the spiritual dimension, with the god above perceiving the ritual and descending to the altar. The phrase describing regular temple worship, "Come before the altar, burn incense, and in worship summon" 焚香拜請到壇前 is a common couplet found in all Táinán-area traditions, usually in response to the tribulations and entreaties of ordinary worshippers: "If there be men or women experience disaster or misfortune, [Let them] come before the altar, burn incense, and in worship request [aid]." [56]

[55] CXT manuscript has 烈位弟子.

[56] 若有男女有災禍, 焚香拜請到壇前 (HST 1:10). This same language appears in HST 1:19,1:20, with alternate phrasing in HST 1:1, 1:9, 1:27. The phrase "come before the altar, burn incense, and in worship request [aid, or 'summon'] 焚香拜請到壇前 occurs 29 times in CXT, often without logical connection to the upper couplet. As such, this stock phrase depicting basic temple worship is used as a kind of filler, but the frequency of such usage illustrates the centrality of this fundamental act of worship in the religious imagination.

Allusions to spirit-possession, and requests for the deity to "come and take possession of the youth" 來扶童 appear frequently throughout the invocations.[57] The modern term "divining youth" 乩童 appears once (HST 1:30); more often, the invocations speak simply of a youth or a "raw youth" 生童.[58] Several invocations ask the god to "take possession of the youth, manifest, and assist with real words" 扶童顯現助真言,[59] a reference primarily to the speech of the medium, but conceivably to spirit-writing as well.[60]

Clearly, facilitation of spirit-possession is among the foremost purposes of Minor Rite performance. In southern Táiwān, this is most often accomplished by the Minor Rite troupe or Ritual Master repeatedly singing the invocation of the deity in question (or those of the temple or altar's main gods) until the deity has fully descended into the Spirit-medium. In past practice, certain temples, including the Bǎo-ān Gōng, performed a complete Purification of the Altar ceremony as prelude to Spirit-medium séance, and this precedent has been maintained to a certain extent by the Shuǐmén Gōng 水門宮, the Bǎo-ān Gōng's major division-of-incense temple in Táinán City.

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[57] E.g. CXT 14, 41, 43,57,71,91,104, 121,126,134, 148, 156, 162, 171, 180, 183, 185; HST 1:4, 1:9, 1:19, 1:30, 1:32, 1:34, 1:52, 2:55, etc.

[58] E.g. HST 1:23, 1:52; CXT 148 and many of the above citations.

[59] HST 1:4, 1:19,1:34; "assist with real words" 助真言 separately occurs in HST 1:8,1:30. In CXT this phrase only appears 3 times, CXT 51, 121, 126 (Same as HST 1:4).

[60] There is an unused invocation preserved in the Héshèng Táng collection (HST 2:34) for the "Great Saint of Working the Planchette" 扶乩[機]大聖 in which this unnamed Saint of spirit-writing declares, "My words are a new brush, writing poems" 新筆題詩是吾言. Usually, however, spirit-writing conducted in regular altars of the Common Religion is done with a small chair called the "Little Hand-sedan" 手轎仔, or a four-man spirit-possessed sedan-chair, which sometimes involves a Ritual Master summoning the spirit into the sedan. Nowadays, many Spirit-mediums will also write words on the altar-table, either with chalk or, like certain sedan-chair practices, in incense-powder.

But the fusion of the Minor Rite and Spirit-medium performance is nowhere more complete than in Pénghú. Though in the Pénghú tradition-group there are Minor Rite ceremonies without Spirit-medium performance (such as the bi-monthly Rewarding of the Troops practiced in Pénghú temples), but there is virtually never Spirit-medium performance without Minor Rite ceremony. This focus on spirit-possession is directly reflected in the comparatively brief Invitation of the Spirits sequence practiced in most Pénghú altars, where in many cases, after the preliminary Opening of the Altar sequence and invocation of Ancestral Masters, the stanza for summoning the Spirit-medium's deity will be repeated until the god has descended, while the drums will continue through the god-medium's customary dance and worship of Heaven, ceasing only when the medium is ready to begin speaking in consultation.[61]

These performative contexts and their symbolic premises have directly shaped the Minor Rite invocations. Influencing all ritual traditions are a set of dynamics that I call a performative economy –the purposes, setting, and expected duration of ritual performance, the symbolic structures and premises of a ritual sysytem, the specific social dimensions of sponsorship, investment in the training of ritual experts, cost-effective ratios of performers, and the relative cultural capital of the symbolic system and performative repertoire involved. Of these considerations, while the comparatively less extensive training required (compared with the Daoist priesthood) has been central to the widespread success of the Ritual Master tradition as a whole, the symbolic premises and contexts of temple-cults have perhaps exerted the greatest influence on the invocations themselves, as well as their assembly into ritual sequences.

[61] See the detailed Outline of a Pénghú Invitation of the Spirits ceremony.

First, the altar-pantheons of local temples and Ritual Master altars are relatively modest when compared to the extensive pantheons of Daoist liturgical systems. At a basic level, this means that a Daoist-style invocation of the altar, which involves reading an inventory of names, when applied to a temple pantheon or Ritual Master altar-system, a simple litany of names cannot occupy enough time to fulfil basic expectations of a ritual performance, nor would such a spoken-prose delivery match the more dynamic ambiance of martial ritual and Spirit-medium performance.

These differences point to a fundamental difference between Daoist pantheons and those of local temples and Ritual Method altar-systems, as the ranks of Daoist divinities are hardly immanent spiritual persona; their nature is defined by the celestial bureaucracy they represent. By contrast, the deified human beings and other fierce spirits of local society, enshrined in local temples and subordinated to the Ritual Master's altar, are intensely immanent and at times highly personal, while their ritual efficacy is achieved primarily through martial and embodied actions rather than the transmission of documents. The tangible presence of these local and Ritual Method deities is embodied in spirit-images, Spirit-mediums, and performance troupes like those of the Five Fury Spirits 五猖, while many of these same gods conduct a lively, two-way communication with devotees through Spirit-mediums, spirit-writing, and the simple forms of divination used daily by ordinary worshippers. The gods enshrined in temples and which incarnate through mediums are portrayed and experienced in ways fundamentally different from traditional Daoist divinities (as well as world-transcending Buddhas and Bodhisattvas).

Ritual Method invocations like those of the Minor Rite genre are shaped by these cultic and performative contexts of the Common Religion. They serve to dramatize the presence of the deity with a musical and rhythmic intensification of ritual mood analogous to the descent of the

deity into their Spirit-medium, while the performative, illocutionary language of the invocations issues ritual commands that mobilize spirit-armies and threaten pathogenic spirits with exorcistic violence. Accompanying these ritual and performative functions, the invocations further express the fundamental premises and practices of the religion, which is to say the cultic and social contexts in which ritual is experienced as efficacious.

Ritual actions are consistently depicted as efficacious through highly embodied forms of spiritual violence and military symbolism, a methodology that not only involves what Schipper called "military metaphors," but a broader paradigm of embodiment in which spirits of all kinds are depicted as possessing substantive bodily form through which they may be compelled and disciplined. As performative speech-acts, the invocations proclaim the basis of ritual power in terms of symbolic military force whose deployment and execution are fused to the speech and gestures of the Ritual Master. These images of the ritual setting, ritual action, and ritual efficacy are interwoven with references to the broader ideology and practice of the religious system, from individual acts of ordinary worship to community rites and ritual processions.

Examples help further illustrate these basic points. The invocation for the main deity of the Héshèng Táng, Third Reverend King Lǐ (Leè) exemplifies the general template which Ritual Masters have used to compose new invocations over time, while emphasizing basic premises of religious practice, including ritual healing:

> I reverently summon Sire Leè, Third Reverend King.
> [His] true form manifests, ghosts and gods are stunned.
> Head wearing a golden helmet, wearing a dragon-robe,
> Feet treading upon a pair of lions, he roams the world.
> [He] personally received the Jade Emperor's authorized command,
> Authorized and invested to cloud-roam throughout all-under-Heaven.
> Left hand holding a jeweled sword slaying fiendish spirits,

Right hand with authorized command to save the common people.
Driving out perverse [spirits] and healing disease are priority number one,
Eliminating and suppressing Killer-spirits, manifesting awesome spiritual power.
If there be men or women who meet with disaster or misfortune,
[Let them] burn incense, bow and summon before the altar.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Reverend King Sire Leè swiftly descend!

HST 1:10 李府尊王[62]

謹請李府三尊王　　真身顯現鬼神驚
頭載金盔穿龍袍　　腳踏雙獅遊世界
身授玉皇親勅賜　　敕封雲遊遍天下
左手寶劍斬妖精　　右手敕旨救萬民
驅邪治病為第一　　收除押煞顯威靈
若有男女有災禍　　焚香拜請到壇前
弟子壇前專拜請　　李府尊王速降臨

In addition to the widely employed iconographic conventions, and the indispensable declaration of authorization from the Jade Emperor, the invocation specifies that in curing disease, Third King Lǐ specializes in "eliminating and suppressing Killer-spirits" 煞, the malevolent environmental spirits that are most frequently blamed for all manner of illness. The exhortation to come and burn incense at the altar, though something of a stock phrase, again affirms the fundamental premises of religious practice.

These representative invocations present most of the prominent and definitive elements which characterize the Minor Rite invocation genre, and which constitute a kind of symbolic and literary repertoire by which the later invocations to temple-gods and other deities have been

[62] There is no CXT invocation for the Three Reverend Kings 劉黃李三尊王, but the Shuǐmén Gōng collection has invocations for these deities, and the invocation for Third King Lǐ shares the lines, "Driving out perverse [spirits] and healing disease are priority number one, eliminating and suppressing Killer-spirits, manifesting awesome spiritual power" 驅邪治病為第一, 收除押煞顯威靈, and the penultimate line of exhortation to come and burn incense, while other lines are in fact the same as invocations from the other two Reverend Kings. This suggests the author of the Shuǐmén Gōng invocations consulted with the HST collection, and probably edited new ones together so as to be distinctive, and not mere copies of the HST text.

composed. In addition to these basic issues of content and structure, as a body of literature depicting religious practice and ideology, several noteworthy topics emerge in the Minor Rite invocations.

Goddesses and Depictions of Divine Women in the Minor Rite Invocations

A major, definitive feature of the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method traditions is the centrality of goddesses and deified female ritual experts. While the substantial focus given to goddesses in these Ritual Master traditions in part reflects a broader trend in the Common Religion, in which a variety of goddesses play important and diverse roles, the Tantric-Popular Ritual Master traditions have given rise to a number of important goddesses in its own right. In the Minor Rite invocations as well as corresponding iconography of spirit-images, murals, and Door-gods, these deified female ritual experts associated with the Ritual Master tradition are portrayed as potent warriors, who, like their male counterparts, wield exorcistic violence to control pathogenic spiritual entities. Other important deities like Māzǔ are also portrayed in invocations as moving on the water "with soldiers to her left and right,"[63] while Guānyīn is depicted as majestically presiding over the violent dispatch of fiendish spirits, with her Vajra-subordinates delegated to do the dirty work. Other, more conventional aspects of goddess-veneration are also articulated, and laced with late imperial ideals of gender. In their unusual breadth, which features a suppressed domain of powerful female ritual experts, the invocations present a complex image of the divine feminine.

[63] HST 1:25 天上聖母.

The prominence of goddesses in the Minor Rite is most fully exemplified in the conventions of the Black-Head tradition-group, whose altars in Táinán and Ānpíng dedicate the latter half of their standard Invitation of the Spirits ceremony to goddesses 女神, who are given their own unbroken sequence, sung in different melodies than the male gods.[64] The segregation of genders represented in this arrangement surely reflects late imperial conceptions of proper gender relations. But it also arises from the importance of goddesses in both temple cults, and in Tantric-Popular Ritual Method pantheons. The contrast with classical Daoism is notable, as there are only five Daoist goddesses out of the roughly one-hundred and twenty-eight summoned in the Língbǎo Invitation of the Spirits.[65] Even in Daoist Ritual Method compendia like the *Dàofǎ* Huìyuán, despite the veneration of Wèi Huácún 魏華存 as a Qīngwéi matriarch, goddesses are conspicuous by their near total absence. The centrality and proportion of female deities in Tantric-Popular traditions of Ritual Method is without parallel in Chinese religious culture.

The most important Ancestral Matriarchs are well known: Línshuǐ Fūrén (Chén Jìnggū) and her two sworn sisters Ninth Lady Lín 林九娘 and Third Lady Lǐ 李三娘, known together as the Three Lady Milk-maids 三奶夫人. These three deified ritual experts preside as the main figures of the Lǘshān Ritual Method tradition, and while native to northern Fújiàn, they are invoked and worshipped across southern China and diasporic communities. But in addition to this prominent trio, there are the Four Immortal Ladies 四仙姑 Qín, Hé, Lǐ, Jì 勤何李記 (Kiḿ, Huĥ, Leè, Geè) who, with the Mysterious Lady of the Nine Heavens 九天玄女 are known as the

[64] In Ānpíng and more "conservative" Black-Head altars like the Yǒngkāng Èrwáng Mìao 二王廟, there is no break between the male and female gods, and though invocations for male and female gods are sung in different melodies, there is only one melody for each. In the Héshèng Táng, however, there are at least two, and often three melodies used for the goddess invocations alone.
[65] See Ōfuchi 256-261.

Female Five Camps 女五營, an important pantheon that has escaped the notice of previous Western researchers. Then there is the Controller of Soldiers, Second Lady Lú 押兵盧二娘, who often appears in larger rites for spirit-soldiers of the Five Camps, and is paired with the Leader of Soldiers Lú Tàibǎo 領兵盧太保.[66] Also noteworthy is Lady Mother Zhū 朱姑娘媽, whose invocation depicts her as "personally constructing" the thirty-six-step sword-ladder which Ritual Masters in Fújiàn (and elsewhere) ascend, a practice later adopted by Chén Róngshèng into the ordination rites of Táinán-area Língbǎo Daoist priests.

In addition to these relatively better-known or still-invoked Matriarchs and martial goddesses, the Héshèng Táng collection preserves a group of eight stanzas for summoning goddesses that with two prominent exceptions are somewhat obscure. As several of these goddesses share similar names, it seems possible that these invocations were formerly used in conjunction with rites for women, perhaps as an altar-system or in conjunction with female Spirit-mediums who served these particular deities. Of these eight, five include martial and violent language indicating these goddesses' exorcistic power.

Table 3.1 Goddess Invocations in the Héshèng Táng and Chéngxīn Tán collections

HST Goddess Invocations	
1:24 觀音佛祖 Buddha-Ancestor Guānyīn	
1:25 天上聖母 Holy Mother in Heaven (Māzǔ)	
1:26 觀音佛祖 Buddha-Ancestor Guānyīn (2)	
1:27 臨水夫人 Línshuǐ Fūrén	Composite surrogate for the Three Milk-maids 三奶
1:28 陳氏夫人 Madame Chén	
1:29 蔡氏夫人 Madame Cài (Tsuǎ)	
1:30 七星玄女 Dark Woman of the Seven Stars	
1:31 註生娘媽 The Lady Who Records Births	

[66] In Lín Dòuzhī's manuscripts, only in the Grand Rewarding of the Troops 大犒賞 text is this figure's name written with the preferable character 盧; in the CXT invocation folio and the Medium Rewarding of the Troops, this figure's name is written as 爐太保.

1:32 勤氏仙姑 Immortal Lady Qín
1:33 何氏仙姑 Immortal Lady Hé
1:34 李氏仙姑 Immortal Lady Lǐ
1:35 紀氏仙姑 Immortal Lady Jì
1:36 九天玄女 Dark Woman of the Nine Heavens
1:37 娘媽（娓娘媽）Lady Mother

Four Immortal Ladies, Female Five Camps 女五營

Save the rarely used 1:26, all of the above (1:24-1:37) are sung in the standard HST Purification of the Altar ceremony

3:32 女媧娘娘 Lady Nǔwā
3:33 雲仙姑 Immortal Lady Yún
3:34 瓊氏仙姑 Immortal Lady Qióng
3:35 碧氏仙姑 Immortal Lady Bì
3:36 桃花聖母 Holy Mother Peach-blossom
3:37 金靈聖母 Holy Mother Golden-spirit
3:38 李三娘媽 Third Lady Mother Lǐ[67]
3:39 龍溪朱晚娘 Evening Lady Zhū of Lóngxī [County]

HST 3:32-3:39 Now unused, possibly an altar-system for women's rites or female Spirit-mediums. 5 of these 8 are depicted with martial symbolism (3:32, 34, 36, 37, 39)

CXT Goddess Invocations

29 陳奶夫人 Madame Milk-maid Chén
30 林奶夫人 Madame Milk-maid Lín
31 李奶夫人 Madame Milk-maid Lǐ

the Three Madame Milk-maids 三奶夫人

32 朱姑娘媽 Lady Mother Zhū — Sword-ladder symbolism
33 皇母娘娘 Lady Imperial Mother
34 觀音佛祖 Buddha-Ancestor Guānyīn
35 七星娘媽 Lady of the Seven Stars
36 註生娘媽 The Lady Who Records Births
37 九天玄女 Dark Woman of the Nine Heavens
38 天上聖母 Holy Mother in Heaven (Māzǔ, same as HST 1:37 Lady Mother)
39 湄洲聖母 Holy Mother of Méizhōu (Māzǔ)
40 天后聖母 Holy Mother, Empress of Heaven (Māzǔ)
41 勤氏仙姑 Immortal Lady Qín
42 何氏仙姑 Immortal Lady Hé
43 李氏仙姑 Immortal Lady Lǐ
44 紀氏仙姑 Immortal Lady Jì

41-44, the Four Immortal Ladies of the Female Five Camps 女五營

45 蔡氏夫人 Madame Cài (Tsuǎ)
46 山頭聖母媽 Holy Mother of Shāntoú
47 山頭三媽 Third Mother of Shāntoú

[67] This is Third Lady Lǐ of the Three Milk-maids, and this invocation is similar to, but not cognate with CXT 31. Both identify her with the Quánzhōu Hǎikǒu Temple 泉州海口廟, like the similar invocation from Lóngyán.

113 白蓮聖母 Holy Mother of the White Lotus[68]
115 押兵盧二娘 Controller of Soldiers, Second Lady Lú Invoked in rites for spirit-soldiers

The Female Five Camps

While the example set by Chén Jìnggū and her sworn sisters established the image of martial, exorcistic goddesses at the head of both temple-cults and Ritual Master pantheons, the figures known as the Four Immortal Ladies, and their organization into a Female Five Camps suggests that such powerful warrior goddesses sprang from a wider milieu of female ritual experts and martial goddesses. This broader realm of divinized female ritual experts is further suggested by fact that earlier narratives of Chén Jìnggū (such as that recorded in the *Sānjiào Dàquán*)[69] Ladies Lín and Lǐ do not appear in the narrative itself. Instead, the hagiography in the *Sānjiào Dàquán* depicts Madame Chén as accompanied by her brother Èrxiāng and his sworn brother Haǐqīng. This suggests that these other goddesses enjoyed independent cults which over time became attached to that of Chén Jìngū, as indeed the late Míng *Sānjiào Dàquán* reports that Ladies Lín and Lǐ were enshrined with Lady Chén in her ancestral temple, but without mentioning them in the narrative.

Though not as well-known as the Three Milk-maids, other, largely overlooked figures show that a range of martial, exorcistic goddesses were closely associated with ritual for women,

[68] This invocation is for the deity worshipped in the Bǎo-ān Gōng, which is in fact the spirit of a spring which rises up through a large, carved stone tortoise. According to legend, this particular stone tortoise was meant to support a stele at the Chìkǎn Tower 赤崁樓, where nine such stone tortoises indeed serve as the bases for large stele inscriptions, which were sent to Táinán in 1786. The one in the Bǎo-ān Gōng was allegedly lost when a boat transporting it to Táinán from Ānpíng capsized, and was later dragged out of the inner harbor and brought to the Bǎo-ān Gōng, where it remains. The spring water rises up through the opening where the stele would have been placed.
[69] See the discussion of prototypical Ritual Masters for a translation of this source.

and like other symbols of the Ritual Master tradition, certain of these warrior-goddesses have become integrated into aspects of the Mínnán-Tawanese temple-cult. The most important of these are the group known as the Four Immortal Ladies 四仙姑 who, with the Mysterious Woman of the Ninth Heaven, are worshipped as the Female Five Camps 女五營. As members of the regional pantheon of the Thirty-six Official Generals, the Four Immortal Ladies are widely represented in temple murals and as Door-Gods, and (more abstractly) enshrined in the installation of Official General Heads found in many temples, including most in Pénghú and Ānpíng.

The spirits of the Female Five Camps are still invoked in virtually every Táinán-area Minor Rite performance. In the Bǎo-ān Gōng lineage-group, they are invoked twice, once in the long, Daoist-style invitation of spirits at the beginning of their standard ceremony, and again as members of the Thirty-Six Official Generals. But in Black-Head altars of Táinán and especially Ānpíng, their individual invocations are sung in virtually every performance involving a standard Unfolding of the Altar sequence.

Their invocations describe all of the Four Immortal Ladies as "Celestial physicians" 天醫 (sometimes with variant homophones like 天乙), and depict each of them as assisting women during birth trauma. In several cases the goddesses speak in their own voice, vowing to rescue women and to be present during women's birth ordeals, and at rites for difficult childbirth. In his study of "Female Gender in Chinese Religious Symbols," Steven Sangren makes an important point which, with certain qualifications, is clearly evidenced in these invocations. In his study, Sangren finds that "[a]s idealizations of womanhood, [...] female deities must overcome the stigma

of pollution associated with menstruation, sexual intercourse, death, and childbirth. Hence, analysis of the purity of female deities serves to highlight what is polluting in women."[70]

As I have emphasized in my analysis of Daoist and Minor Rite ritual, the most fundamental, initial, and repeated ritual act is purification, and overwhelmingly this most basic ritual act of purification is explicitly aimed at banishing, for a time, the ambient traces of death from the ritual arena. But in the case of these deified female ritual experts, the symbolism presented in the invocations foregrounds these issues that Sangren raises of impurity arising from women's blood and birth-trauma.

We have already seen the stanza for Immortal Lady Hé, where the sword-wielding goddess proclaims that "[I] stand in the Lake of Blood and save women. Destroying filth (or, impurity 穢), rescuing childbirth, I am above; removing adversity, rescuing from difficulty, I am in front." Aside from the Four Immortal Ladies, invocations for the Lady Who Records Births, and Controller of Armies, Second Lady Lú also specifically depict these goddesses as "entering the Lake of Blood to save women."[71] It is by directly overcoming this epitome of female impurity, symbolized in the Lake of Blood, that these goddesses demonstrate their power whereby they rescue women and their children from both the horrors of premodern childbirth trauma, as well as the post-mortem impurity of the Lake of Blood hell-realm, which, as I have argued elsewhere, represents the nadir of impurity standing opposite to the (male) Three Pure Ones at the incipient apogee of the ritual cosmos.

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[70] Steven Sangren, "Female Gender in Chinese Religious Symbols: Kuan Yin, Ma Tsu and the Eternal Mother," *Signs* 9 (1993): 11.

[71] CXT 116 押兵盧二娘: 打破三都九江岳，入在血湖救女人; HST 1:31 註生娘媽:立在血湖救產生; CXT 36 註生娘媽: 入在血湖救產人.

The reference to this hell-world and post-mortem ritual is made explicit in the invocations for Lady Hé and Second Lady Lú, which use (variants of) the same language stating that the goddesses "destroy the three roads and the Nine-Continent mountains" 打破三途九州岳, a probable reference to rites like "destroying the hell-prison" 破獄 which are meant to liberate souls from imprisonment in the underworld. Mortuary ritual for women and their children who die in bloody childbirth forms an important item in the funerary repertoire,[72] usually under names of the Lake of Blood or "Smiting the Blood-pan" 打血盆. Despite these references to mortuary ritual, the language and symbolism of the Female Five Camps is primarily oriented toward healing ritual, especially in rites meant to avert the pre-modern scourge of death through difficult childbirth 難產.[73] Though language of healing appears in each stanza of these "Celestial physicians," the invocation for Immortal Lady Lǐ is particularly revealing in this regard:

> Female doctor of the Upper Realm, Maiden Leè,
> Spiritual power transforming, ritual power without end.
> Originally [she] was a girl of the human world,
> Merit cultivated to fullness, [she] paces [with a] true body.
> Seeing the mortal world with so many epidemic diseases,
> [She] descends to take possession of the Spirit-medium, and assist with true words.

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[72] See Ōfuchi, 《中國人の宗教儀禮》, 637-647.

[73] In the Táinán region, it appears one (if not the) main ritual used for such purposes was the Sacrifice to the Stars 祭星, which not only is meant to propitiate and send-off the spirit of the Celestial Dog 天狗 and White Tiger 白虎, known to eat fetuses (Hou 1979), in the ritual texts of the Shànhuà Zhōng-family Daoist lineage, their manuscript for this rite features an optional addition to the Invitation of the Spirits with a list of goddesses to be summoned when used to avert difficult childbirth. This list is headed by the goddess Madame Pond-Head 池頭夫人, a deified woman of the Táibeĭ region who was killed for warning her Quánzhōu immigrant community of a sneak attack by a force of Zhāngzhōu men during the period of local feuding 分類械鬥 in Qīng Táiwān. According to legend, late one night in 1853 while she was with child, she sat beside a pond at the Wànhuá Lóngshān Sì 萬華龍山寺 and sitting there alone noticed a group of men from Zhāngzhōu coming to attack their community. She cried out in alarm, and in fury the Zhāngzhōu men cut off her head there beside the pool (hence her title), but as the alarm had been raised, the attack was driven off. She is enshrined in the Wànhuá Lóngshān Sì, and in at least two other important Táibeĭ temples, the Xiàhaĭ Chénghuáng Miào 霞海城隍廟 and the Dàlóngdòng Bǎo-ān Gōng 大龍洞保安宮, a major temple to Bǎoshēng Dàdì. (Lín Jìnyuán 林進源 2005:395).

The Realized Lord of Compassionate Assistance [Bǎoshēng Dàdì] transmitted [to her] secret methods,[74]
Evil perverse [spirits] and evil ghosts are transformed into dust and smoke.
The temple has Thirty-six Generals,
Evil perverse [spirits] and evil ghosts are all completely terrified.
Completely healing gangrenous ulcers and mothers in difficult birth,
Eliminating disaster and sending down blessing, the lady immortal manifests.
[If someone] has a problem, with focused mind urge [with] invocations and summon,
When [the goddess] comes [she appears in] a cloud and mist, truly manifesting in person.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Immortal Lady Leè personally descend!

HST1:34 李氏仙女

上界女醫李少娘　　神通變化法無邊
原是人間女子身　　功成行滿步真身
雖見世間多疾病　　扶降乩童助真言
慈濟真君傳祕法　　惡邪惡鬼化塵煙
宮有三十六員將　　惡邪惡鬼盡皆驚
全治瘡癰產難婦　　消災降福現女仙
有事專心催咒請　　來時雲霧真現身
弟子壇前專拜請　　李氏仙女親降臨
神兵火急如律令

Here the invocation first portrays Immortal Lady Lǐ as a deified human being who gained merit through cultivation, and then presents her as receiving secret ritual teachings from the deified physician and great saint of Tóng-ān County, Bǎoshēng Dàdì, who, as we have seen is widely portrayed as a Lord-of-the-Rite in Black-Head Minor Rite traditions, where he presides over numerous Ritual Method pantheons, from the Tantric pentad of the Root Altar invocation, to the Three Altars (in Ānpíng), and the Five Camps as well. Immortal Lady Lǐ is said to descend and "take possession of the Spirit-medium" 乩童, motivated by her sight of epidemics in the world. In

[74] The True Man (or here, lord) of Compassionate Assistance 慈濟真人 / 真君 is Bǎoshēng Dàdì's 保生大帝 title; this here is yet another indication of how Bǎoshēng Dàdì has become identified as an Ancestral Master of the Ritual Master tradition.

medically specific language, the Lady is said to "completely cure gangrenous ulcers[75] and mothers in difficult birth," suggesting ritual healing for more conditions than birth-related issues alone.

The rhythmically dynamic invocation for Immortal Lady Geè (Jǐ), written in five-character couplets (likely patterned on the five-character stanza for General Black Tiger, with which it forms a conspicuous parallel in the ritual sequence),[76] describes the Lady and Celestial physician as "holding medicine, [she] comes to rescue [from] suffering." With typical iconographic language and first-person delivery, Lady Geè states that she has vowed to save women, and manifests for those who recite her invocation. In the Héshèng Táng version, the stanza ends with certain a note of resignation, declaring that "all the myriad affairs must take their natural course" 萬事必自生,[77]a sentiment not unlike the fatalism reported by gazetteer authors who describe the rationalizations of temple faithful when ritual healing fails.[78]

Much as how the Four Saints of Zhāng, Xiāo, Liú and Lián 張蕭劉連 (Diōñ, Siaû, Laú, Leń) came to be associated with the Five Camps, and the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar assigned to the central, fifth camp, so too these Four Immortal Ladies were at some point organized into a corresponding Female Five Camps, with the Dark Woman of the Nine Heavens 九天玄女 generally regarded as the central and fifth. While these five are still routinely invoked

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[75] Here HST has 瘡癱, while CXT 43 has the homophonous (and equally obscure) 瘡癱, while the Ānpíng Miàoshòu Gōng writes 瘡瘍, also a Mínnán homophone. Because of the rarity of the characters 癱/癱 , in the HST manuscript, Zhǔyīn has been added so that troupe members know this is pronounced yong̍.

[76] In all Black-Head Minor Rite altars, the invocation for General Black Tiger is either the penultimate or final invocation of the male gods; likewise the invocation for Immortal Lady Geè marks the end of the goddess invocations. In Ānpíng it tends to be the final goddess invocation, in direct parallel with General Black-Tiger, but in Táinán there are often two more: the Dark Woman of the Nine Heavens, and Lady Mother. In all Black-Head altars, the goddess invocation sequence ends with Prime Marshal Nuózhà.

[77] HST 1:35. CXT 44 and the Miàoshòu Gōng have substituted a more optimistic phrasing here, with CXT 44 reading "a myriad blessings must naturally arise"萬福必自興; the Miàoshòu Gōng largely the same "a myriad blessings must naturally arrive"萬福必自臻.

[78] See the chapter on the Literature of the Wū, and the discussion of spiritistic medicine.

together in most Black-Head Minor Rite performances, despite the near total-disappearance of the healing rituals for birth trauma, as a specific ensemble, the Female Five Camps are still visible in their occasional enshrinement as Outer Camps 外營 around a temple's precinct, and in liturgies for Summoning the Female Five Camps preserved in two places Ritual Master Lín Dòuzhī's manuscript collection.[79]

Figure 3.2 Spirit-images of the Female Five Camps, Miàoshòu Gōng, Ānpíng. Photo by author.

Only on two occasions have I been able to observe an actual martial ritual of Summoning of the Five Female Camps 調女五營 (as opposed to the routine summons of their leaders, the Four Immortal Ladies and the Dark Woman of the Nine Heavens). One such occasion was performed

[79] One version was included in the CXT volume Ritual Master Lín gave me in 2011,where it forms part of the Rewarding of the 36 Official Generals, while the other is found in the Grand Rewarding of the Troops 大犒賞.Both versions are essentially identical, though the Grand Rewarding of the Troops includes what amount to segues between preceeding and following ritual segments.

in conjunction with a Rite of Animation 開光 at a historic temple for Guānyīn (帆寮慈蔭亭), in which a small temple from the Táinán suburbs had come to animate an entire altar-installation of new spirit-images. The Ritual Master and Minor Rite troupe hired for this occasion practiced a variant of the Bǎo-ān Gōng tradition known as the Xuánmén 玄門 lineage, which is essentially identical to the Bǎo-ān Gōng/Xújiǎ tradition save for their veneration of Xuántiān Shàngdì as Ancestral Master, hence the liturgy used was the same as the Chéngxīn Tán.

As Guānyīn was the main deity of both this more famous temple (the Ancestral Temple in this relationship) and the visiting group, new command-flags for the Female Five Camps had been made and were also animated. These command-flags were then used to Summon the Female Camps in exactly the same way as their male counterparts, while new spirit-armies were drawn from the Ancestral Temple (as is normal for such relations between an Ancestral Temple and its Division-of-Incense 分香 temples) , using talismans for each of the Four Immortal Ladies and the Dark Woman of the Ninth Heaven. The only difference between the Summoning of the Female Five Camps and that of their male counterparts occurred in the Binding-up the Altar-space 結界 sequence, where instead of using a sword and incense, the Ritual Master used a long-stemmed flower and incense for the dance movements of this operation. This symbolism of the flower and incense is in fact stated in the formula used. Aside from this minor alteration, the rest of the ritual and its invocations are the same as the normal, highly martial and dynamic Summoning of the Five Camps; even the formula of Binding-up the Altar-space still ends with its standard ritual command: "If any outside perverse [entities] infringe upon the interior of my altar-space, [they will be subject to] death-by-slicing from whirling sabers"若有外邪侵吾壇界內, 輪刀寸斬不留停.

In 2014, the Pújì Diàn, as part of their annual procession to renew the Outer Five Camps 外營 that mark their large precinct, installed new Outer Camps shrines to replace the old ones, and in the process installed separate shrines for the Female Five Camps, a practice which had precedent in the temple's past, and is not unknown in the region.[80] When these shrines were installed, the same procedure for Summoning the Camps was used, but with the invocations for each of the Four Immortal Ladies and the Dark Woman of the Ninth Heaven in place of those for the male "Saints" 聖者 of the Five Camps.

Thus despite the near-total disappearance of the healing rites for women that involved these Female Five Camps, their former prominence is preserved in their continued invocation in ceremony and depiction on temple murals and Door-Gods. As a direct legacy of their former importance in healing ritual, they are among the pantheon of Tantric-Popular deities invoked in the Língbǎo Daoist priests' version of the Red-Headed rite of the Sacrifice to the Stars 祭星, which ritual instructions in the Shànhuà Dàotán manuscript specify as being a rite performed for birth trauma, with an additional pantheon of goddesses to be summoned when performed for such purposes.[81]

These four are also worshipped as the main deities of a major temple in rural Táinán –the Lady Mother Temple 姑媽廟 of Xīgǎng district, and the original host of the major Xīgǎng plague-expelling procession.[82] As Immortal Lady Qín's traditional birthday falls on 7/7, since this was the

[80] One informant has reported that in the past, the Yǒngkāng Èrwáng Miào 二王廟 also maintained Female Outer Camps.
[81] Ōfuchi 678.
[82] Academia Sinica Cultural Resources Geographic Information System, 姑媽廟, (ret. 8/2019) http://crgis.rchss.sinica.edu.tw/temples/TainanCity/shigang/1114003-YCKJGMG .

date when young women worshipped goddesses to enhance their skill at weaving, this suggests another level of cultic integration with rites for women.

Though not as pronounced as the iconography of the Three Milk-maid Ladies Chén, Lín, and Lǐ, who are routinely portrayed as Red-Headed Ritual Masters with dragon-horn and ritual implements in hand, occasional symbols in the invocations identify other goddesses as deified Ritual Masters. In her invocation, the Dark Woman of the Nine Heavens says that

> I am the Third Master's Third Girl,
> Descended to the Peach-garden, cavern immortal lady.
> At Lúshān [I] personally received transmission as a ritual method disciple,
> [To] rescue from suffering and save from difficulty [I] descended into the mortal world.[83]
>
> 吾是三師三女子　　降落桃園洞仙女
> 身在蘆山傳法子　　救苦救難到凡間

Here, the Dark Woman identifies herself with that ubiquitous phrase of Ritual Master ceremony, the Third Master Third Lad 三師三童子[...], but reworded to feature her feminine gender. Moreover, the invocation specifies that she went to "Lúshān" to learn Ritual Method; the variant character given here (蘆) is also found in Ānpíng manuscripts, while the Chéngxīn Tán manuscript has a different variant (爐). But we are justified in taking this to be a reference to Lúshān 閭山, as conflations among these and other variant forms are common across the region.

Madame Cài 蔡 (Tsuă) is a Liúqiú goddess widely worshipped in coastal Fújiàn, often conflated or associated with Māzǔ, but in many Táinán traditions identified as Chén Jìnggū's mother.[84] Madame Cài's invocations likewise state that "at thirty she went to learn Ritual Method, [now she] commands a million Celestial soldiers 夫人三十去學法, 統領天兵百萬人.[85] Where

[83] HST 1:36, CXT 37.
[84] HST 1:28 陳氏夫人: 父是陳家陳長者, 母是西凉蔡夫人.
[85] CXT 1:29 蔡氏夫人.

Black-Head manuscripts feature a unique, five-directional subordinate pantheon in her invocation (used in the rite of Crossing the Bridge), the Red-Headed Chéngxīn Tán instead gives further depiction of Madame Cài: "with a sword she roams under Heaven, expelling perverse [entities], seizing ghosts, and controlling fiendish spirits "身佩寶劍遊天下, 驅邪捉鬼治妖精.

The Controller of Soldiers, Second Lady Lú (CXT 116), is depicted in her invocation as riding a white horse and commanding essentially all of the Ritual Master's subordinate pantheons, from the Five Camps and Fierce Generals of the Three Altars (a reference to the 36 Official Generals), to the Tantric pentad of the Root Altar and a panoply of Five Thunders spirit-soldiers. To concentrate all of these important pantheons into Second Lady Lú's command clearly portrays her as a spiritual parallel to the Ritual Master. The importance of this deity and her partner "Commander of Soldiers, Lú Tàibǎo is further attested by their presence in Lűshān liturgical manuscripts in Lóngyán, including the same major text of the Wánglǎo tradition, the *Dàxiāng Gòng Yīzōng* 大香供一宗, in which we find many symbols shared with traditions of the Mínnán littoral, including an invocation for Guānyīn transmitted in Táinán.[86]

Different invocations to evidently the same goddess, a Lady Mother Zhū 朱姑娘媽, also depict her in strongly martial terms. In the Chéngxīn Tán manuscript, this goddess is associated with Yóuxī 尤溪 and Shā County 沙縣 in northern Fújiàn, while the Héshèng Táng version has Lóngxī 龍溪 in Quánzhōu as her native place. Otherwise, the two invocations are unrelated, but the Chéngxīn Tán version depicts her as personally constructing the Sword Ladder used by Ritual Masters, and further states that "Lǎojūn personally conferred [authority] upon me to command

[86] Guǎngjì Tán 2:178.

Celestial soldiers" 老君賜吾統天兵.[87] Though lacking any reference to the Sword Ladder, the Héshèng Táng invocation describes her as bearing a sword, performing exorcistic healing, and "entering the fire and arraying troops to save the common people."[88] Extensive fire symbolism in the invocation, with alternating references to ice and frost suggests a ritual application for curing fever, or rites for fire-walking or other feats requiring the conquest of fire.

Importantly, these more martial goddesses are, in most cases, described in connection with forms of ritual healing, as the exorcistic paradigm involved in most healing ritual employs military metaphors for subduing pathogenic spirits, expelling impurity, and protecting supplicants. As such, many of these goddesses are more directly connected with the Ritual Master's own altar-system, though several, from Chén Jìnggū to Immortal Lady Hé, are worshipped as main temple gods as well. If, as Steven Sangren has argued, female deities reflect Chinese ideals of womanhood, then these potent, exorcistic goddesses and Ancestral Matriarchs represent a suppressed or forgotten image of powerful female ritual experts. It seems possible, given the establishment of Sòng-era cults to such "Female Wū" 女巫 that they enjoyed greater popularity before the Míng, as the kinds of female Spirit-mediums found in late imperial and modern sources are mostly the "Puppet-Aunty" 尪姨 type, who specialized in channeling dead ancestors, rather than exorcistic healing.

Moreover, new goddess-cults in the late empire tended to be like that of the local Táinán goddess Huáng Bǎogū 黃寶姑 (1843-1862), who, when her husband died soon after their marriage, insisted on maintaining her chastity, and when betrothed against her will, drowned herself in the

[87] CXT 32 朱姑娘媽.
[88] HST 3:39.

reflection pond at the Fǎhuá Monastery 法華寺.[89] The idealization of such "Women Martyrs" 烈女 in late imperial culture represents a very different vision of the divine female than the warrior spirits invoked in Ritual Master ceremony, though perhaps both have gained their power, as Sangren argues, through sacrificing their potentially polluting and divisive roles as wives.

Late imperial values in goddess invocations

While the image of the martial goddess has taken root in Ritual Method pantheons to an extent rarely seen in other Chinese religious contexts, many of these same goddesses have been subjected to late imperial conventions of the idealized woman. For example, in the Héshèng Táng invocation for the Dark Lady of the Seven Stars, the goddess is depicted wearing

> On [her] head a golden crown covered with a purple cloud,
> Beneath her feet, bow-shoes three inches long.[90]
> 頭上金冠蓋紫雲　　腳下弓鞋三寸長

In the invocation known as Lady Mother, associated in Mínnán regions with Māzǔ, iconographic language in the stanza describes the goddess from head to foot:

> On [her] head twelve pairs of golden hairpins,
> [Her] feet stepping [with] bow-shoes, three inches long.[91]
> 頭上金針十二對　　腳踏弓鞋三寸長

These goddesses are depicted with bound feet. If we take "bow shoes" 弓鞋 – the miniature, high-arched, crescent-shaped shoes typically worn by high-born women– as an indicator or metonym

[89] She is enshrined in the "Gū Filial Woman Temple"辜孝女廟 (aka 辜婦媽廟) that was established earlier for a similar "Female Martyr" 烈女 in 1789. See Chén Réndé 陳仁德, 《臺南縣市寺廟大觀》, 56.
[90] HST 1:30.
[91] HST 1:37, CXT 38.

for bound feet, then the Dark Woman of the Nine Heavens is also described as "presenting her bow shoes at the mouth of the three rivers" 弓鞋獻出三江口,[92] while in the Chéngxīn Tán collection, Māzǔ is described as "wearing bow shoes on her feet, she walks on the water" 腳穿弓鞋水上行.[93]

Such imagery is also found in Lǘshān texts of Lóngyán and Jìanyáng. In Lóngyán, in a series of three invocations for each of the Madame Milk-maids Chén, Lín, and Lǐ, the first invocation for Chén Jìnggū presents a paradoxical image of the potent, martial goddess commanding fierce subordinates, while wearing embroidered shoes on her bound feet:

> [I] burn incense and bow to summon
> Fúzhōu Three Mountains, Gǔtián County, Third Lady Línshuǐ of broad blessing,
> In the second year of the Táng-Sòng she received transmission of orthodox Ritual Method,
> Personally passing through ritual before the altar.
> The Generals of the Three Primes arrive at the Lady's ritual,
> The soldiers and horses of the Five Furies assist the lady's pacing the polar constellation.
> Sometimes in the world of the living, rescuing [women from] difficult birth,
> Sometimes in the Prefectures of the dead, taking hold of people's souls.
> My Lady, on her head she sticks golden hairpins divided on two sides,
> Her feet treading with embroidered shoes three inches long.
> On her body she wears a gauze skirt, riding a white horse,
> Celestial soldiers and celestial generals follow as she goes.
> With her mouth she blows a rhinoceros horn, a real precious horn,
> Her body wearing a tathāgata demon-slaying robe.
> The Black Crow flies, transmitting incense-missives,
> The White Crane holds documents [in its beak], transmitting memorials before the Lady.
> Three loud summons, and the Lady then arrives,
> Three quiet summons and the Lady then arrives.[94]
> Thy disciple before the incense burner, in worship with invocations summons,

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[92] HST 1:36, CXT 37.

[93] CXT 40.Here HST 1:25 says she wears "phoenix shoes"鳳鞋 , a more general term for embroidered shoes that might or might not imply shoes for bound feet.

[94] Compare with the Táinán invocation for Línshuǐ Fūren: "[If someone] has a mind to summon the Mother, the Mother will know, with no mind to summon the Mother, the Mother still comes 有心請媽媽也知, 無心請媽媽也來 (HST 1:27, CXT 46, the latter incorporated into an invocation associated with Māzǔ in Mínnán regions, an issue discussed below).

Fourth Lady Chen, descend.
With authorization to proceed, urgent as fire, as the Law commands.

焚香拜請

福州三山苦[古]田縣　林水[臨水]廣福三夫人
唐宋二年傳正法　親身直透法壇前
三元將軍就娘法　五猖兵馬助娘罡
或在陽間救產難　或在陰府取人鬼
我娘頭插金釵分兩邊　腳踏綉鞋三寸長
身着羅裙騎白馬　天兵天將相隨行
口吹犀牛真寶角　身穿如來斬鬼衣
烏鴉飛來傳香信　白鶴含書奏娘前
大叫三聲娘便到　小叫三聲娘便來　[叫=叫]
弟子爐前奉咒請　陳四夫人降來臨[95]
敕到奉行、火急如律令。[96]

This remarkable invocation portrays Lady Chén as a prototypical Ritual Master, blowing a horn and commanding a host of subordinate pantheons, including the fierce Five Furies who often appear in Ritual Master traditions of northern and western Fújiàn, and thence to northern Táiwān as well. More broadly, we see how the general form and structure of the Minor Rite-style invocation is clearly exemplified here, from opening and closing phrases to its use of iconographic language, indication of authorization, and depictions not of mythic narrative but of ritual performance, complete with such details as the Black Crow 烏鴉(烏鴨) emissary, a symbol often represented in ritual by a papier-mâché image.[97]

But even while commanding these vast spirit-armies, Lady Chén is also portrayed as wearing delicate embroidered shoes on her tiny bound feet. Such was the image of a proper and presentable lady in the late imperial period when this and most other Minor Rite invocations were

[95] The designation Madame Chén as the "Fourth" is related to the Wánglǎo tradition's special reification of Chén Jìnggū into a separate avatar known as Wánglǎo.
[96] *Guàngjì Tán*, 2:220-1.
[97] There is an invocation for the Black Crow emissary in the HST rite for the Sacrifice to the Stars 祭星 (HST 6:19 巡爐烏鴨使者).

composed, and given the conventions of iconographic depiction in the invocation genre, such imagery was perhaps a natural elaboration of this descriptive technique, given the intense fixation on miniature bound feet as an iconic element of female perfection.

However, we find what can be read as a remarkable challenge to this ideal in a major Lűshān ritual narrative text of Chén Jìnggū of the Jiànyáng-area, the *Nǎiniáng Zōngzǔ běn* 奶娘宗祖本 (*Book of the Milk-maid Lady's Ancestral School*).[98] In this striking and genuinely vernacular text,[99] when Lord-of-the-Rite Ninth Lad 九郎法主 is teaching Madame Chén Lűshān pacing methods, he orders her to change her attire and appearance:

> Lord-of-the-Rite Ninth Lad personally ordered,
> Ordered his disciple Chén Jìnggū to
> Undo her flat-dragon top-knot,
> [Unbind] her three-inch golden-lotuses, and consecrate her bare feet.
> Her eight-yard gauze skirt, roll it up to her waist,
> Exposed feet and exposed hands are better for pacing the polar constellation.
> The Lady obeyed her Master's order,
> Undid her flat-dragon top-knot,
> Unbound her three-inch golden lotuses and consecrated[100] her bare feet,
> Rolled up her eight-yard gauze skirt to her waist,
> Exposed feet and exposed hands are good for pacing the polar constellation,
> The lady's refined appearance swiftly became that of a Lord-of-the-Rite,
> And came to resemble the top Military exam candidate,
> With streaming hair parted on her head, she moved freely.[101]
>
> 九郎法主親吩咐　　吩咐徒弟陳靜姑
> 平龍髻仔要解脫　　三寸金蓮敕赤腳
> 八付羅裙到兜札　　露腳露手好行罡
> 娘娘着得從師命　　平龍髻仔就解脫
> 三寸金蓮敕赤腳　　八副羅裙到兜札
> 露腳露手好行罡　　娘娘粧速法主樣
> 生成好似武狀元　　披頭散髮作洋坪

[98] *Jiànyáng* 508-593, in three 上中下 sections.
[99] As will be presented below, the notion that the Táinán-area Minor Rite invocations are examples of vernacular language, and that the tradition can be meaningfully characterized as "vernacular" based on such language simply lack merit.
[100] Or, ritually authorized 敕.
[101] *Jiànyáng*: 541.

In this dramatic scene, which forms a capstone moment in her ritual education, the legendary Ancestral Master of the Lűshān Ritual Method orders Lady Chén to unbind her feet, roll up her trailing skirt, and let down her hair in the Wū-style manner of an exorcist, all to facilitate ritual performance. At one level, this transformation could be read as a negation of her feminity, and her virtual reconfiguration as a male, like the "top Military exam candidate" and the Lord-of-the-Rite himself.

I should note that while the *Nǎiniáng Zōngzǔ Běn* is very much a ritual text, complete with invocation of the Emissaries of the Three Realms 三界使者, in its vernacular language and narrative format, this text differs dramatically from the Minor Rite invocations and their kin, even while employing familiar linguistic conventions such as iconographic language. The complex scene enacted in the above passage represents the kind of narrative episode that only a narrative text can accommodate; the invocations, by contrast, only rarely make more than passing reference to mythic narrative, or any events in the deities' past, but instead feature performative language which concretely dramatizes the presence of the deity and their subordinates, while evoking the premises and symbols of ritual performance.

While these issues will be further explored in the following section, one last goddess invocation also illustrates the characteristics of the invocation genre, but with unique language depicting another idealized goddess, the Lady Imperial Mother:

> I bow to summon the Imperial Queen-Mother of the Third Palace, Exorcist of Perverse [spirits] and Healer of Disease,
> She rides a precious horse and goes forth into the mortal realm.
> Her hand holds a marvelous flower, seizing perverse ghosts,
> Slaying perverse demons, she enters the Imperial Palace.
> A parasol of real pearls covers the Lady Mother,

Five-colored command flags follow the Lady's person.
Rouge-paste on her face, her cheeks vermilion red,
Her mouth like a cherry blossom just as it opens.
Her ten fingers pointed like slender bamboo shoots,
Behind her back [trails] a gauze sash of embroidered love-birds.
Branches and leaves bend to welcome her,
Myriad sons and grandsons flow unceasing.
Disciple of the Ritual school in concentration bows to summon,
Imperial Mother-lady, descend.

CXT 33 皇母娘娘

拜請三宮驅邪治病皇太母　身騎寶馬出凡間
手執妙花收邪鬼　收斬邪魔入皇宮
真珠涼傘蓋娘媽　五色旗號隨娘身
面上胭脂顏朱色　口似英桃花正開
十指尖々如羌笋　背後羅帶綉鴛鴦
枝々業々相接引　子々孫々萬流傳
法門弟子專拜請　皇母娘々降臨來

This goddess, sometimes understood as another aspect or incarnation of Chén Jìnggū, is here likewise described in alternating images of exorcistic violence and conservative feminine charm. The language used to depict her rouge, cherry-red lips, and slender, bamboo-shoot fingers is completely without parallel in any other Minor Rite invocation that I am aware of. While this stanza is now rarely if ever used in ritual, it captures the iconographic merger of an idealized female appearance with the exorcistic power of a healing goddess. In some ways, this invocation makes explicit what many works of spirit-image statuary already display, namely that powerful goddesses are still portrayed as embodying normative ideals of both attractiveness and status, as the fine skirts, hair arrangements, hairpins and shoes of these goddesses are likewise indicators of high social status, commensurate with their exalted spiritual power. Hence, in many of the invocations, an earlier tradition of potent exorcistic goddesses, associated primarily with healing and childbirth ritual, have been partially reinterpreted so that elements of their iconography conform with late

imperial ideals of how women with status should appear. Nevertheless, these deified, female ritual experts remain potent spirits, and embody a martial conception of the divine feminine that stands in stark contrast to the compassionate mother-goddesses, paragons of chastity, and self-sacrificing female martyrs promoted in late imperial society. In Tantric-Popular forms of Ritual Method, a cultural memory and religious ideal of powerful women has endured as a major hallmark of the entire tradition, and in the number and prominence of such strong, martial goddesses is to my knowledge without parallel in other arenas of Chinese religions.

Vernacular Daoism?

In a seminal 1985 article, Kristofer Schipper, based on fieldwork conducted in Táinán during the 1960s, analyzes the respective natures of Língbǎo Daoism and the Minor Rite as "classical" and "vernacular" Daoism respectively, a relationship which he then insightfully parallels with a series of oppositions formed among these two distinct but complimentary ritual traditions.[102] Schipper bases this linguistic premise in the language (ostensibly) used in their respective liturgies, as the highly literate tradition of the Língbǎo priests, as an expression of literati culture is exclusively composed and performed in (often quite florid) Classical Chinese 文言文, while the liturgical language of the Ritual Masters, Schipper argues, is an expression of "vernacular" language, and hence part of a broader vernacular culture. Professor Schipper clarifies that:

> By "vernacular" I mean here a spoken language that does not necessarily correspond to pure dialect, but to a general idiom that transcends narrow linguistic frontiers. In the case of Hokkien, for instance, the language of the vernacular ritual

[102] Kristofer Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical Ritual in Taiwan," in *Journal of Asian Studies* 45:1 (Nov. 1985): 21-51.

> is similar to that used in the regional secular literature, especially that of ballads (koa) [歌] and songs (khek) [曲]. This literature is available in writing, mostly in manuscript, although since the eighteenth century ballads have circulated in print (the so-called koa-a,-chheh) [歌仔冊]. The area of distribution of these ballads included southern Fukien, parts of central and northern Fukien, and part of the Ch'ao-chou region." (Schipper 1985b:21)

This passage conveys much of Shipper's thesis concerning "vernacular Daoism," including his general theory to explain the nature and origin of the Minor Rite invocations 咒語 and other liturgies that form the structure and content of the tradition in Tainan. Based on his initial examination of both the ballad-pamphlet 歌仔冊 (gūa-â-tseih̍) genre and the Minor Rite invocations, Schipper came to believe that "the language of the vernacular ritual is similar to that used in the regional secular literature, especially that of ballads." This, he argues, indicates that the invocations and ballad-pamphlets shared a broader literary and cultural milieu –a regional "vernacular" culture composed of vernacular ritual and drama.

Schipper presses this analysis with his characterization of the invocations, where he concludes that

> The invocations (chu) that call upon the Gods to manifest themselves through the medium always give a short rendering of the history or myth of the deity concerned. They are, in fact, short epic ballads, describing the attributes of the god and the events during which he or she demonstrated supernatural powers. In an expanded version, these invocations become regular epics sung by the blind bards, the traditional per-formers of kua-a-chheh [歌仔冊]. Similar parallels may be found for the ritual songs that accompany the 'journeys.' The same descriptive text of the trip to the Inferno can be found in a kua-a-chheh"[103]

[103] Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical," 31.

The connections among this ostensive vernacular ritual and other performance genres are so extensive, Schipper argues, that "[f]rom a literary point of view, the cult of local deities, the ritual in the vernacular, popular stories in ballad form, and theater performances all form an integrated whole."[104]

Continuing, Schipper reprises these observations, and from them draws an important contrast between the Minor Rite and "classical" Daoism:

> Another important distinguishing factor is the content of the texts. Vernacular ritual ballads contain, in long or short versions, the 'history' or, better, the myth of the deity invoked.... These narrative and mythological aspects are completely absent in classical ritual.[105]

From these passages we may summarize Schipper's argument regarding the Minor Rite invocations as based on three primary elements: 1) their vernacular language, 2) the claim that the invocations "always give a short rendering of the history or myth of the deity concerned. They are, in fact, short epic ballads," and 3) based on these two factors of vernacular language and myth, there exists a connection between the Minor Rite invocations and the ballad-pamphlet genre, and thence a wider vernacular performance culture.

Closer examination, however, reveals that these three factors, on which Schipper's entire vernacular thesis is primarily based, range from the inflated to the unfounded, and in the final judgement substantially mischaracterize the invocations, while deflecting historical inquiry away from more fruitful directions, and toward specious associations with unrelated performance genres, including the ballad-pamphlets, with which the Minor Rite invocations of the greater

[104] Ibid., 32.
[105] Ibid., 33.

Mínnán/Taiwanese tradition have absolutely no connection with whatsoever, nor is their language remotely similar.

In fact, the portrait of an integrated vernacular culture presented likewise mischaracterizes the kinds of language used in such performance genres as the (two kinds of) puppet theatre and stage opera, as the former in particular employs highly literary language, while the latter makes use of an entire spectrum of language from simple literary Mínnán through more arguably vernacular and purely colloquial Taiwanese. But in no case are these other performance genres –or their particular forms of language- related to the Minor Rite invocations.

First let us begin with the issue of vernacular language itself. There are two rather different ways in which the language of a performative text, recited in a "conservative" language like Southern Mín, could be meaningfully considered "vernacular", or not: first, in its written and grammatical form, i.e., the language itself, and second, in terms of the variable, dual pronunciation scheme which figures very prominently in Southern Mín, where many characters have a "literary" reading 文讀音 (b̄un ta̍k yeem̂) and a "vernacular" pronunciation 白話音 (b̄ei ūe yeem̂). While the literary reading was historically used for reading documents –and hence Daoist liturgies– in everyday language, the literary reading still often appears in compound terms,[106] names, and even the numbers used to state phone-numbers. Moreover, traditional oratory is also delivered in the literary pronunciation mode, a form of language best preserved nowadays by certain Buddhist monastics, most notably Zhèngyán Fǎshī 證嚴法師.[107] The traditional puppet theater exclusively

[106] For example, most compounds of 學 use the literary reading: 文學 b̄un ha̍k and 大學 đai ha̍k etc., where as the simple verb 學 is pronounced uh̍, as is the somewhat modern term 同學 đong uh̍.
[107] Zhèngyán (Chengyen) is the spiritual leader of the highly influential Tzu-chi 慈濟 Buddhist organization, and delivers daily Dharma-talks in both classical Mínnán and Mandarin on the Tzu-chi cable channel Dà-ài 大愛.

employs the literary pronunciation, including in popular, modernized television versions. Thus, in varying degrees, substantial elements of the literary pronunciation scheme are still experienced in both normal language use, and in highly public dimensions of traditional culture.

In terms of Schipper's vernacular thesis, the relative juxtapositions enabled by this dual pronunciation scheme constitute the most justified aspect whereby the Minor Rite invocations can –relative to "classical" Daoist liturgy, be meaningfully said to embody aspects of vernacular language. However, the picture is far more variable than Schipper implies, and in fact he raises the issue without specifically pursuing it. While pointing out that the Daoist liturgy is "done in the classical Hokkien pronunciation," it is only implied, or perhaps assumed that the Minor Rite therefore, as if by definition, must use the vernacular pronunciation system. In a nuanced argument about the nature of his proposed vernacular language as a regional, rather than local mode of language, Schipper argues that the "vernacular ritualists use an idiom not confined to a small community, but instead use a language shared by large linguistic and cultural groups."[108] Clarifying his basic premise, Schipper specifies that

> [b]y 'vernacular' I mean here a spoken language that does not necessarily correspond to a pure dialect, but to a general idiom that transcends narrow linguistic frontiers. In the case of Hokkien, for instance, the language of the vernacular ritual is similar to that used in the regional secular literature, especially that of ballads (*kua*) [歌 guâ].[109]

As Schipper nowhere specifically states that the Minor Rite, as "vernacular" ritual, employs this vernacular pronunciation mode, readers are left to assume this, along with his broad identification of the Minor Rite invocations with these other forms of vernacular, secular literature.

[108] Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical," :22.
[109] Ibid., 21.

This basic assertion, or assumption, that the Minor Rite employs the vernacular pronunciation scheme is only partially correct. In practice, such usage is highly uneven, both within the same altar's recitation, and among different altar-traditions. In other words, the vernacular pronunciations are not consistently used, as if this were a general rule. In fact, many of the most common vocabulary are always pronounced in their literary values. For example, "head"頭 is pronounced taú in the vernacular, or colloquial mode, but in the Minor Rite invocations (when it means "head" and is not a modifier meaning "front")[110] it is always pronounced in the literary reading tiuh́. Likewise the word "leg" or "foot" 腳 is, with but one exception (in Héshèng Táng performance)[111] always read in the literary pronunciation kiuĥ, and never the colloquial kâ. The character for "person" or "people" 人 is, but with one exception,[112] also always pronounced in its literary reading leeń, not the colloquial lanǵ. Likewise "temple" or "palace" 宮 is always pronounced gyonĝ, and never in the colloquial ginnĝ; so too "official" 官, which is always read in the literary tone guań and never the colloquial guāĥ. Numbers are all pronounced in their literary values.

While many characters are, in fact, always recited in their literary pronunciation, some are variably pronounced both ways, with such variability often related to either the different meanings of a single character, or to preferences based on which pronunciation feels and sounds more natural in any given phrase. Thus, in a single altar's performance, many characters will, in different places,

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[110] The two instances of such usage both appear in HST 1:24 觀音佛祖, where the phrases 頭排"front rank" and "front gate" 頭門 use 頭 as an adjective, and here it is recited in the colloquial pronunciation taú.

[111] Also in HST 1:24, where the Four Great Vajra Spirits are said to strike fiendish spirits with their feet 收來妖精用腳踏. Arguably, the vernacular reading kâ better fits the meter and the phonetics of the previous and following characters; tiuh́ by contrast would be awkward, especially following 用 yonḡ.

[112] In HST 1:37 娘媽 "Lady Mother" (discussed below), one line of parallel couplets uses this colloquial pronunciation, but again given the character's placement within a phrase, the literary reading would be more awkward, and less natural.

be read in both pronunciations (once on way and elsewhere, the other).[113] For example, where the character 月 means "moon" it is always read in its literary pronunciation guaʼt, but where it means "month" it is read in the colloquial gueh̍. "Horse" 馬 is always pronounced in the literary reading mà, except when the faster "Goddess Melody" is used, rather than the slower "Southern Reed" 南管 melody, in which case the colloquial reading beì is preferred, evidently, because the particular cadence of the faster and differently-phrased Goddess Melody makes the colloquial pronunciation feel more natural following the preceding verb "to ride" 騎, which is always read in the colloquial kiá, and never the literary keé.[114] Other examples, such as variable readings of 正 (colloquial jiāh̍, literary jinn̍g) and 精 (jiāĥ and jinn̂g respectively) also appear throughout the standard Héshèng Táng ritual program.[115]

However, in certain Minor Rite altars, such as the Ānpíng Miàoshòu Gōng, the classical pronunciations predominate. Thus virtually all of the characters which in Táinán proper are, in

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[113] In HST performance, examples include 壇 pronounced in the literary dań in HST1:2 合壇, and HST 1:21 玄壇元帥, while elsewhere, including the standard closing line of each invocation, 壇 is read in the colloquial duāh̍. The character for "incense" 香 is mostly read in the colloquial hiōĥ, but in HST1:37 娘媽, it is read in the literary hiong̍, twice in one couplet, perhaps because this pronunciation feels and sounds more natural with the phonetics of the phrase. The character for "horse" 馬 is read in the colloquial beì only once, in HST 1:37, but only when the faster Goddess Melody is used; even here, when sung in the slower Nánguǎn 南管 melody it is pronounced in the literary reading mà, as is the case in all other invocations, such as in HST 1:4 開台聖王, HST 1:6 保生大帝 (本壇), HST 1:7 哪吒太子, HST 1:16 吳府千歲,HST 1:21 玄壇元帥. "Mountain" 山 is only read in the colloquial suāĥ in the paired couplets of one line (HST 1:27 臨水夫人), while elsewhere it is always recited in the literary pronunciation sań, as in HST 1:6 保生大帝, HST 1:12 保安廣澤尊王, HST 1:20 福德正神, HST 1:22 黑虎將軍, HST 1:25 天上聖母, HST 1:36 九天玄女, HST 1:52 連聖者神咒, HST 2:48 龍樹醫王, HST 2:55 雪山聖者. Hence closer examination vernacular pronunciations in practice reveals a high proportion of literary readings, even in altars like the Héshèng Táng, where there are more vernacular, or colloquial pronunciations than in Ānpíng, where there are virtually none.

[114] In the relatively faster-paced Goddess Melody, k̄ia beì would be easier and more natural to pronounce in smooth succession than k̄ia mà.

[115] For example, 正 is always read in the literary pronunciation when part of the phrase 正神 j̄inng sheeń, but when describing the central space where Wéituó 韋陀 stands before the image of Guānyīn, 佛前韋陀豎正中, it is pronounced in the colloquial jiāh̍.

most places, read in the vernacular pronunciation (壇 duãn̂, 前 jinn̂g, 聲 shiãn̂, 驚 gyãn̂, 請 chiãn̂), in the port town of Ānpíng, these are read in their literary pronunciation (壇 dań, 前 jiań, 聲 shinn̂g, 驚 ginn̂g, 請 chinǹg).[116]

As Daoist ritual is, in theory, always conducted in the literary mode, the fact that the Minor Rite employs a variable proportion of vernacular pronunciations is notable, but the actual situation in practice in no way conforms to a pure or consistent adherence to vernacular pronunciation. In fact, a high proportion of classical or literary pronunciations are employed in Táinán-area Minor Rite performance. The simple fact that all numbers are read in their literary values helps indicate how Ritual Masters and their troupe members are not approaching their tradition as a form of vernacular language.[117]

If Schipper's thesis is that the "vernacular" rites of the Ritual Master (by which he meant Táinán-area traditions) are performed using the vernacular or colloquial pronunciation values of the Mínnán language, then this claim is true but only partially so, and it appears that Schipper simply assumed the entire performance employed the vernacular mode, like the most colloquial forms of Taiwanese opera. If so, such assumptions are simply inaccurate.

If there is highly qualified merit to the vernacular thesis in terms of pronunciation, then the actual language of the Minor Rite invocations is another matter. Not only are the invocations said to be written in a form of vernacular Chinese, Schipper specifically claims that their language "is

[116] Though the case of "whip"鞭 is reversed, at least in the opening and closing formula that are not part of the regular invocations, as Ānpíng altars (like the Miàoshòu Gōng) use the colloquial beē̍n̂, while in Táinán it is always pronounced in the literary beń.

[117] Over the years, numerous practitioners of the Minor Rite have remarked to me that the invocations involve a particularly "deep" form of Taiwanese language. Their point is, the language strikes them as noticeably different from their ordinary language.

similar to that used in the regional secular literature, especially that of ballads", and that such "Hokkien vernacular literature, when put into writing, makes use of a certain number of writing conventions and demotic characters, but these particularities are not so numerous as to make the texts unintelligible to the Mandarin reader."[118] While this latter statement is true of the Ballad-pamphlet genre, it is completely untrue of the Minor Rite invocations, which are in no way a form of written, vernacular Hokkien, employing demotic characters or other grammatical forms of Mínnán. Only by very generous allowance can a miniscule number of linguistic features found in the Minor Rite invocations be considered broadly vernacular, and their contrast with the genuinely vernacular Ballad-pamphlets reveals how starkly different, in fact, the invocations are from any true vernacular text.

Specifically, what linguistic features make written Chinese demonstrably vernacular? First, a range of non-classical vocabulary appears in vernacular writing, from pronouns (他 as 3rd person pronoun) to certain verb-object compounds (吃飯, 走路, etc.) and compound verbs (感覺, 知道, 打算, etc.), while in narrative literature, devices like 且說 ("thus it is said") feature prominently in commencing new passages, and marking segues in the narrative. But beyond more colloquial vocabulary, vernacular writing is distinguished from Classical Chinese as a different linguistic mode by grammatical particles and constructions wholly unlike Classical Chinese, and more like the spoken language. Foremost are verbal suffixes which connect a verb with its object or predicate, primarily 得 dé , as well as 起 qǐ ,到 dào, and 來 lái, plus the marker of past action 了 le (Mínnán liaù). The Mínnán language has a number of distinctive grammatical particles, including 著/着

[118] Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical," 21.

diuh̍ and 甲 gah̍ (both used like the 得 and 到 in Mandarin), among other auxiliary verbs like 欲/卜 beh̍ (like the Mandarin 要, 想要, 快要 etc.). Then there are measure-words like 個 gè, and possessive markers such as 的 dé, both of which have equivalents in the Mínnán 个 leí and eí, respectively. Constructions involving these grammatical particles, as well as more modern and colloquial vocabulary are the hallmarks of vernacular writing 白話文, and can be seen throughout vernacular Chinese fiction from the Yuán and Míng onward. By contrast, the terse, formal diction of Classical Chinese, though not without grammatical particles of its own, pointedly lacks the grammatical and lexical features which define vernacular Chinese and vernacular Mínnán as distinctive linguistic modes, or in fact, different languages.

History provides no better example of written vernacular Mínnán than the Qīng and Republican-era Ballad-pamphlets (歌仔冊 gua-â tsoe̍h), most of which were composed in Xiàmén and Táiwān in the late 19th or early 20th C.[119] These fascinating texts are remarkable for the portraits of life they provide, and for their written representation of a genuinely vernacular form of the Mínnán language. As a performance-genre, their haunting folk melodies and "Moon-lute" 月琴 accompaniment evoke a kind of tragedo-comic mood in sympathy with their narratives, which overwhelmingly portray characters from ordinary Taiwanese and Fujianese life, often set amid the uncertainties of immigration, the vicissitudes of poverty, and the tensions of family relations.

[119] Two excellent databases of Ballad-pamphlets provide access to nearly-complete collections of all known, extant Ballad-pamphlets, and offer extensive bibliographic and explanatory materials, including some recordings and videos that allow one to simultaneously hear and read the ballads. One database is run by the National Museum of Taiwan Literature, and is available here: http://koaachheh.nmtl.gov.tw/bang-cham/index.php . Another, based from National Taiwan University, is available here: http://cdm.lib.ntu.edu.tw/cdm/landingpage/collection/kua-a-tsheh (accessed 8/2019).

Issues of language are aptly illustrated by the same Ballad-pamphlet that Schipper himself cites, "Newest Song of Descending into the Dark" 最新落陰褒歌,[120] in which part of the content has in fact been adapted –but not copied word-for-word– from the Ritual Master liturgy of the descent to the underworld. This purely coincidental act of plagiarism –part of a pattern wherein ballads were continually copied and reissued under modified titles, was a major reason why Schipper apparently believed there to be a connection between the Minor Rite invocations and the Ballad-pamphlet genre. However, the ingenious adaptation of this evocative Ritual Master liturgy into a Mínnán Ballad-pamphlet stands as an isolated instance, and the language has been substantially altered, indeed rendered much more "vernacular" than the Ritual Master liturgy itself. Moreover, religious themes in general form a distinct minority of Ballad-pamphlet subjects, which overwhelmingly deal with characters enmeshed in the vicissitudes of ordinary life, which is in fact the setting of the ballad in question.

In this ballad, a man falls ill, and his wife first summons a doctor 先生 who determines the man to be beyond saving, and leaves without prescribing medicine (1a). Next, the wife goes to the temple of the City God and inquires with the god through his Spirit-medium, who, after the god descends 城隍跳起 instructs the wife to take what is called "incense burner elixir" 爐丹(lôu dan̂) – a bit of compressed incense ash dug from the deep interior of the god's incense burner, and to prepare it as medicine for her husband (1b). The Spirit-medium further reveals that there is a ghost in her husband's room, and so to exorcize it she calls a S̄ai-Gon̂g 司公, whom the text calls a Ritual Master 法師 after he arrives. The details that follow display familiarity with Ritual Master

[120] Schipper offers a date of 1915, but the National Taiwan University database, while confirming the same publisher Schipper provides, says the date is "unclear" 時代不明. Other editions in the same database date to 1925 and 1936.

ceremony, which would have been recognizable to listeners as well: entering the patient's room, the Ritual Master scatters salt-and-rice, posts talismans on the sick man's mosquito-net, and cracks the ritual whip 打法索(2a-b.) From exorcism, the rite turns to soul-recall, with clothing and incense used to help recall the husband's souls so that his "three cloud-souls and seven bone-souls return to elder-brother's body" 三魂七魄歸哥身. But the rite is to no avail, and though the Ritual Master has left, the man's souls have not returned. On his deathbed, the husband gives instructions for the distribution of his remaining assets, and instructs his wife to call for his younger brother so that the husband can, while still living, head off suspicion that his wife deliberately poisoned him with medicine (3a). But before the wife can contact the younger brother, the husband first passes away, while the younger brother just happens to come of his own accord, and immediately suspects the wife poisoned his brother. Questioning her, the younger brother demands to know why, if a doctor was called, there was no prescription 葯方 left as proof, and concludes the wife must have poisoned her husband (4a). Then to prove her innocence, the wife summons a type of female Spirit-medium that we can infer is the kind known as a "Puppet Aunty" 尪姨, as the text tells us that she "summoned the Third Lady" 請三姑 to set up an altar in her home, and thence descend into underworld to go in search of her departed husband's spiritual essence (4a).[121] At this point, the descent into the underworld begins, and after bringing his souls back from the Citadel of the Unjustly Killed 枉死城, he is restored to life, everyone is reconciled, and there is a lavish sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord of Heaven 拜天公 –complete with the requisite pig and goat– plus

[121] Such Puppet-Aunties specialized in this kind of ritual, set in client's homes and as De Groot reports (6:1333) often in the women's apartments. For more on these Puppet-Aunties see the chapter on the Literature of the Wū.

worship of several more gods (土地公，佛公，公婆), the purchase of multiple kinds of spirit-money, and operatic performances in a tent set up in the street (7a-b).

The details of the story reveal that its author was clearly conversant with Ritual Master ceremony, and the incorporation of elements from the underworld liturgy suggests personal association with Ritual Masters, but since in the story, the Ritual Master fails where the female Spirit-medium and faithful wife succeed, it seems unlikely the author him (or her?) self was a Ritual Master. Moreover, the numerous details of religious practice, from the "incense-burner elixir" to no less than three ritual experts and the sacrificial program at the end all display substantial realism, and it is a pity such depiction of religious practices and their social contexts were not more frequently explored in the Ballad-pamphlet genre. Hence where Schipper dismisses the plot of this text as "a flimsy intrigue," a closer reading in fact reveals a source filled with realistic depictions of religious practices and social relations.[122] Moreover, Schipper summarizes this ballad by saying, "a man, having lost a friend, goes to the temple where he finds a medium who takes him on a journey,"[123] which at best only loosely corresponds to what happens in the text.

But beyond the detailed subject matter, the issue of language can be addressed by examining the first page of the text, which is shown below with accompanying diagrams indicating some of the many features of vernacular Mínnán language found on this page, and which typify not just this one text, but the entire Ballad-pamphlet genre. First, we note the extensive use of colloquial vocabulary, which is completely absent from the Minor Rite invocations. Then there are numerous grammatical particles and constructions definitive of vernacular language, of which I

[122] In the chapter on the Literature of the Wū, I show where this same Ballad-pamphlet provides important clues regarding issues surrounding the popular fears of medicines, a theme raised in gazetteer sources of the Qīng and Republican periods.
[123] Schipper 1985b:31-2.

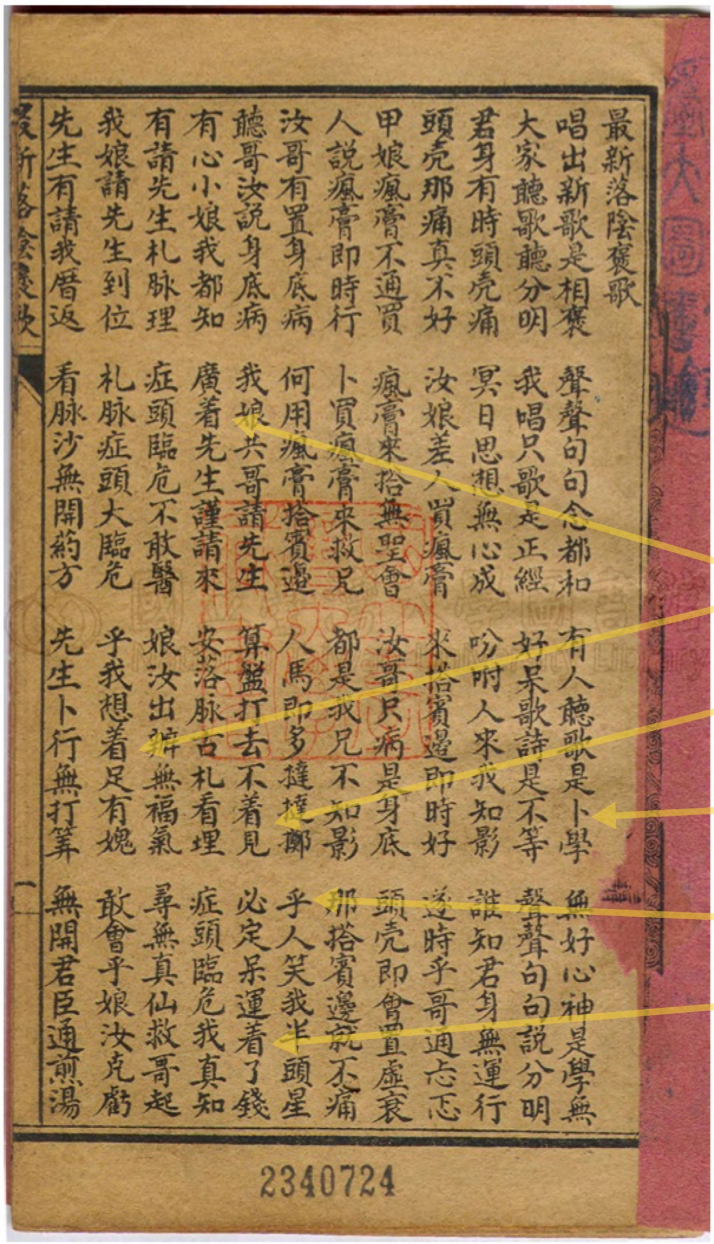

Figure 3.3

First page of "The Newest Song of Descending into the Dark"
《最新落陰褒歌》 showing colloquial Mínnán language and grammar which typify the Ballad-pamphlet 歌仔冊 gua-á-tsheh genre, and which never appear in any Minor Rite invocations

Highly colloquial (and modern) vocabulary:
大家 ta-ge
頭殼 thau-kak
頭殼痛 thau-kak thiah
知影 tsai-yiah
打算 pah sng

Grammatical expressions:

"廣着" gong diuh for 講到着 diuh, like Mandarin 到

着 diuh, like vernacular/Mandarin 得

卜 = beih, Mínnán auxiliary-verb "wants to," "about to" (欲)

乎 hoo as passive-voice marker (予)

着 diuh, like Mandarin 就

Every pair of couplets rhyme

have only indicated a few in the accompanying chart; others include 甲 gah as the Mínnán equivalent for 跟 gēn, and the intensifier 足 jiok, like the Mandarin 很 hén or 非常 fēi cháng. No such grammatical particles of vernacular Mínnán occur in the Minor Rite invocations.

Now, if we examine where this particular ballad makes use of imagery and vocabulary from the Ritual Master liturgy (四角亭 "Four-corner Pavilion," 六角亭 "Six-corner Pavilion," and phrases of "presenting paper money" 獻紙錢, "emit a bold light" 發毫光, and so on), alongside these phrases and symbols we see many of the same vernacular elements, where they are absent in the original liturgical text. In the ballad, the vernacular language not only makes the content more easily

understood, like so much vernacular Chinese literature, it also serves to foreground the thoughts, actions, and interactions of the characters involved. If we examine one page (5a) of the ballad-

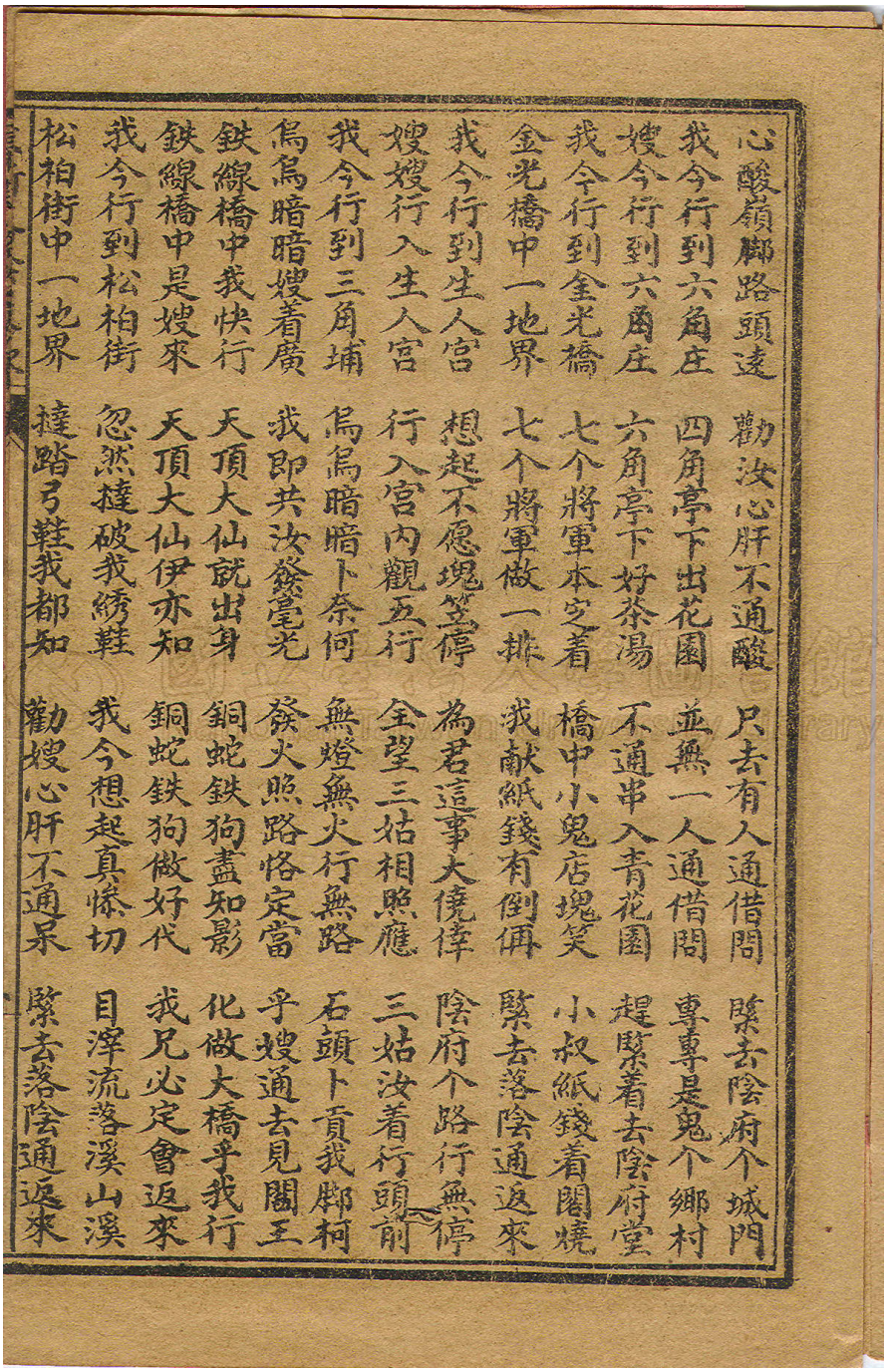

Figure 3.4 Page 5a from "Newest Song of Descending into the Dark" 最新落陰褒歌, showing vocabulary and symbols of the Ritual Master liturgy reinterpreted in highly vernacular language very unlike that of the Minor Rite liturgical text.

version of the underworld journey, then again we immediately find many vernacular elements of Mínnán which are entirely absent from the Minor Rite invocations and other liturgies: 緊去 ĝin keě (go quickly), the possessive 个 eí, 乎 hoū (like the Mandarin 給 gěi), 頭前 ṫau jinńg (like the Mandarin 前面), the verb 知影 ṫzai-yiāh̍ (Mandarin 知道) and so on. These kinds of vernacular expressions and vernacular grammar do not appear in the Ritual Master liturgy, or in the Minor Rite invocations.

If we compare the Táinán-area Minor Rite sources with this particular ballad, where some of these same symbols and phrases appear, it is immediately evident that the language of the Minor Rite text is completely unlike that of the vernacular Ballad-pamphlet.

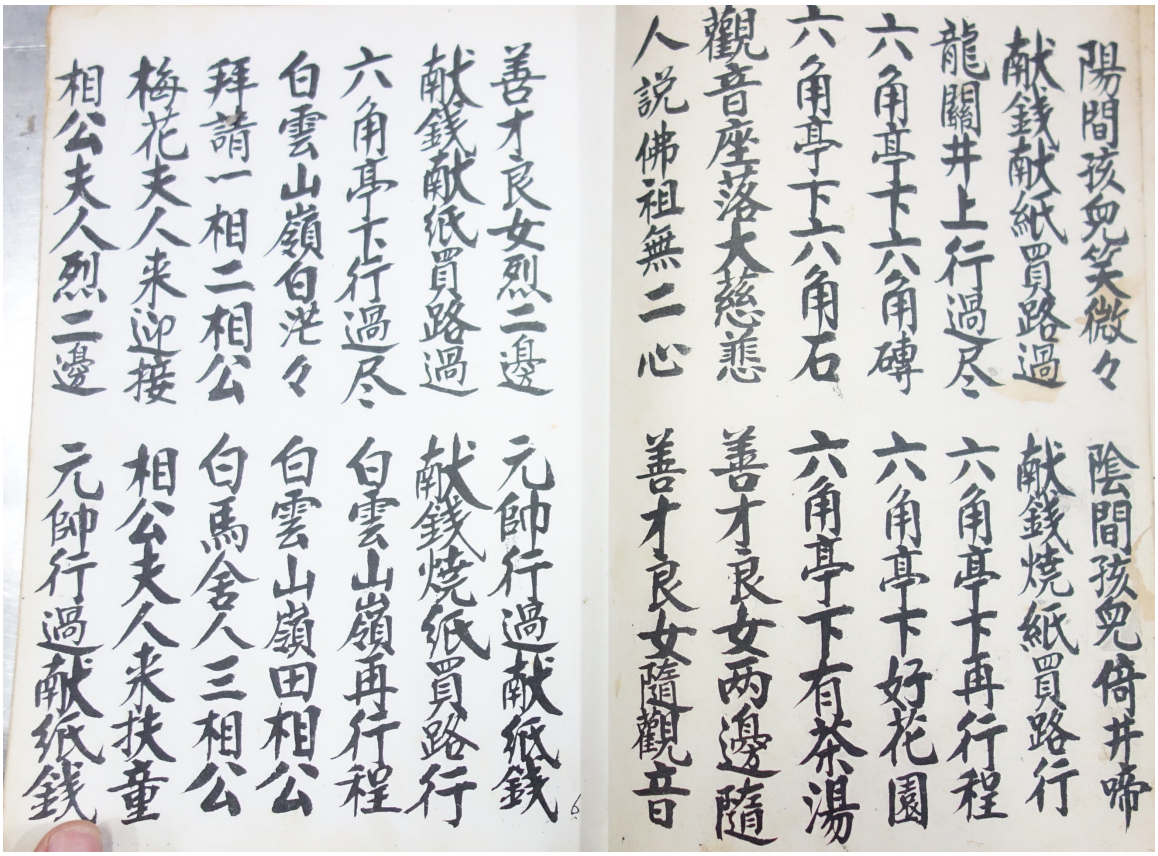

Figure 3.5 Page from the Miàoshòu Gōng 妙壽宮 Presentation of Cash to Supplement Fortune 進錢補運 liturgy with some of the same symbols seen in the page cited above from the Ballad-pamphlet, showing fundamental differences in the types of language used in the two different kinds of texts.

To be sure, the Ritual Master liturgy of the journey through the underworld possesses a kind of folk-song-like cadence and simplicity, and there are one or two vernacular expressions sprinkled here and there, notably the verb 借問 jiuh mn̄g ("to inquire"), which does not appear in other Minor Rite invocations. But to equate the Ritual Master liturgy shown here with "vernacular" Mínnán, which Schipper believes to be written using "demotic characters" as exemplified in the Ballad-pamphlets, and to then claim that the language of these Ritual Master texts is highly similar to those of the Ballad-pamphlets, such notions are simply without any basis in fact whatsoever, and substantially mischaracterize the nature of the language used in the Minor Rite invocations and other liturgies.

Aside from the Ballad-pamphlet and Ritual Master liturgy of the underworld, what about the Minor Rite invocations themselves? What does a close examination of their language reveal in terms of vernacular linguistic content? If we take the standard Héshèng Táng (HST) Purification of the Altar sequence as a sample, then by my estimation we may count the following instances as arguably vernacular:

Standard HST Purification of the Altar liturgy
4,031 characters 字
168 lines of two couplets (not counting "swift as fire, as the law commands" 神兵火急如律令)

N = Instances in the text , V = verb

了 liaù = 1
便是 = 1
著 diuh̍ (as verbal 得) = 2
V + 起 = 8
V + 來 = 3

Total = 16 characters out of 4,031 (0.4%) in
10 out of 168 lines (6%)

Examples in context:

開壇咒 Altar-opening formula:

米敕是鹽米。敕了飛沙共石子。

Invocations:

HST 1:1 玉虛

鐵鞭並鐵鎖　　提起鬼神驚

奉請九天千眼帝　　騰起麒麟下壇來

HST1:3 清水祖師

發起毫光炎炎光　　發起毫光救萬民

HST 1:5 玄天上帝

黑旗展起鬼神驚

HST 1:7 哪吒太子

一日狂風便吹起　　直到今鑾玉殿前

釋迦臨水無龍子　　便是童哪勅骨生

HST1:19

靈符展起邪魔走　　降在地下渡眾生

HST 1:4 開台聖王

元是前朝忠良將　　帶來兵馬鎮台郡

HST 1:24 觀音佛祖

上才提來符水鉢　　良女執來楊柳枝

HST 27 臨水夫人

高山峻嶺也著過　　高山險嶺也著行

In the totality of the Chéngxīn Tán (CXT) folio, a similar search reveals the following statistics:

CXT folio = 30,111 characters

V+起 = 50 (30 in the regular 197 invocations, and 20 in the repeated formula for the Five Camps and five-directional Five Emperors)

V+來 = 42

了 liaù = 1

V+得=2

CXT 106 溫府千歲

有人念得吾神咒　　真身顯化到壇前

CXT 120 齊天大聖

元是如來一點血　　授得精華獻真形

着 diuh̍ (verbal 得)=2 (same as HST 27, alternate character)

CXT 31 李奶夫人

高山峻嶺也着過　　險嶺高山也着行

Total: 97 characters among a total of 30,111 (0.322%, very close to the HST Invitation of Spirits =0.35%)

These totals, which include as many broadly vernacular elements as I can identify, are rather small. As the percentage of arguably vernacular characters is very close among both collections (approximately 0.4 percent) the percentage of lines in which such vernacular expressions appear is also likely similar (6% in HST)[124]. This means that though identifiably vernacular constructions of these types do appear, they only occur in a small number of instances, with no such vernacular features in 94% of all lines in the invocations used in the Purification of the Altar liturgy. Moreover, we do not find the vernacular vocabulary which permeates the Ballad-pamphlets or Míng vernacular fiction, nor the definitive, vernacular grammatical particles which likewise fill the pages of vernacular writing. The notion that the invocations feature demotic characters representing vernacular Mínnán, as is the case with the Ballad-pamphlets, is simply mistaken, and reflects major misconceptions of the Minor Rite texts that closer examination of the texts themselves should have easily dispelled.

When examined closely, the Mínnán-Taiwanese Minor Rite invocations are found to be written in a very simple kind of literary Chinese, with a pinch of quasi-vernacular constructions

[124] Given the nature of the CXT folio, with its long prose lead-in, and other variably-organized text, calculation of lines the 200+ page volume is impractical.

(0.4%) sprinkled in. But in many cases, these arguably vernacular constructions have been added so as to fill out the meter, as the addition of verbal suffixes like 起 and 來 are simple and convenient ways to make an idea or phrase fit the 7-character metrical scheme, rather than indications of a vernacular language-mode, in which meanings are consistently expressed through grammatical particles, as in the Ballad-pamphlets or spoken Mínnán.

Thus, based on their written form, to claim that the Minor Rite invocations are an expression of vernacular language, or can be meaningfully characterized as vernacular is simply without serious merit, and represents a significant and counterproductive misconception. The Minor Rite invocations are not like Táng poetry or Sòng verse, but they are not really forms of vernacular Chinese either. Nor are they merely somewhere in between. The invocations may be grammatically simple and possess a circumscribed vocabulary, but they are not vernacular in any meaningful or concrete sense of the term, and seeking any historical, ritual, or literary explanations through the concept of the vernacular does not lead to sound or salient conclusions.[125] The Minor Rite invocations did not develop in relation to any vernacular literature or other performance genre, but from precedents and linguistic techniques visible in the Daoist Ritual Method texts of the Míng Daoist Canon.

Before exploring this background, we must deal with the inverse corollary of its "vernacular" alternative, namely the concept that the Minor Rite invocations are primarily concerned with the deities' histories or myths, and are thus like narrative ballads. On this topic Schipper writes,

[125] The educated native speakers and Taiwanese researchers to whom I have posed this issue also do not believe the Minor Rite invocations represent vernacular Chinese, and the stark differences with the Ballad-pamphlet genre are readily apparent to those conversant in the relevant languages, and knowledgeable of these different textual genres.

> Vernacular ritual ballads contain, in long or short versions, the 'history' or, better, the myth of the deity invoked. (1985b:33)...
> The invocations (chu) [咒] that call upon the Gods to manifest themselves through the medium always give a short rendering of the history or myth of the deity concerned. They are, in fact, short epic ballads, describing the attributes of the god and the events during which he or she demonstrated supernatural powers. In an expanded version, these invocations become regular epics sung by the blind bards, the traditional performers of kua-a-chheh [gūa-â-tsěi 歌仔冊, Ballad-pamphlets]. [126]

Again, the notion that the Minor Rite invocations have any relationship whatsoever with the Ballad-pamphlets is completely erroneous. For yet another example, the one place where we might actually detect such a connection is between one major invocation for the Third Prince Nézhà[127] and a Ballad-pamphlet about the god. The invocation contains among the most mythic-narrative related content of any Táinán-area Minor Rite invocation, with four out of thirteen lines offering synoptic references to the god's mythic deeds, but these are so elliptical and allusive that only the most tenuous connections can be made with content depicted in the Ballad-pamphlet "Song of Nézhà Roiling the Eastern Sea 哪吒鬧東海歌.[128] This ballad not only provides the only example where a god represented in a Minor Rite invocation is also featured as the titular subject of a Ballad-pamphlet, in the ballad we find none of the phrases, iconography, or distinct language of Nézhà's or any Minor Rite invocation. In the absence of any straightforward connection between the invocation and Ballad-pamphlet, the fact that this particular invocation features so many oblique narrative references is clearly related to the cultural prominence of the Third Prince in late

[126] Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical," 31.
[127] HST 1:7 哪吒太子/CXT 68 哪吒太子.
[128] Available online here: http://koaachheh.nmtl.gov.tw/bang-cham/thau-iah.php . Schipper does not specifically mention this Ballad-pamphlet, or any beside the one explored above, though he published a bibliography of these Ballad-pamphlets early in his career.

imperial narrative dramas, but this has not produced a direct connection between these dramas and his Minor Rite invocations, as the purposes, techniques, and contexts of the Minor Rite invocation genre are completely unlike those of narrative dramas.

Not surprisingly, where we find narrative references in Minor Rite invocations are precisely those for deities most prominently featured in late imperial fiction and drama: Qítiān Dàshèng (i.e. Sūn Wùkōng 孫悟空, CXT 120 齊天大聖), Guān Gōng (CXT 63 關聖帝君), and the aforementioned Third Prince 三太子 and his brothers (CXT 65-72). But these exceptional cases are hardly representative of the invocation genre as a whole. The invocation for the Third Prince's father Lǐ Jìng (CXT 74 李靖天王), for example, only has one couplet in which first-person language declares "I have three sons that are Prime Marshals"; the rest of the invocation depicts the Tantric iconography of these Prime Marshals, together with other subordinate deities, who "slay all unlawful spirits Under Heaven." Thus, even where we might have reason to expect narrative content, instead what predominates are the usual depictions of ritual and spiritual actions, together with the subordinate pantheons who execute ritual power.

Perhaps the most extensive mythic content of any Minor Rite invocation that I am aware of appears in the Chéngxīn Tán stanza for the Five Blessed Emperors of Fúzhōu (CXT 124 福州五靈公),[129] which at sixteen lines is also among the longest. Of these, fully six outline the well-known and highly influential myth of the five examination candidates who "heard that Fúzhōu would experience disaster," and then resolved to cast themselves into the well where plague-poison had been deposited. Though important details are elided in the invocation, such an extended

[129] HST 2:32 五福大帝 shares several phrases with CXT 124 ,but is much shorter, and only gives two lines of general narrative allusion.

statement of a mythic cycle, ending with their post-mortem appointment as ministers of the Plague Bureau 瘟部主宰公 is unique among the invocation genre. This special emphasis reflects in part the tremendous influence of this story on Fujianese religious culture, as other Wángye deities, from the Five Lords of a Thousand Years 五府千歲 to the Three Reverend Kings 三尊王 worshipped at the Héshèng Táng all adopted elements of this mythic narrative of exam candidates who sacrificed themselves to protect a community from plague.[130] But even here, the remaining eight lines present standard, Minor Rite-style depictions of the gods' spiritual actions in the context of ritual performed before an altar, where "unorthodox perverse demons" are "transformed into dust."[131]

While Schipper cites a few lines from the liturgy of Entering the Flower Garden,[132] only once does he quote parts an invocation, in this case an important and widely used one known as the "Lady Mother" 娘媽 invocation, among other titles (HST 1:37/CXT 38), though his rural source includes an entire section not found in any collections (that I am aware of) in Táinán City or Ānpíng. He offers the following translation:

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[130] On the Five Lords of a Thousand Years 五府千歲 see Liú Zhīwàn，「臺灣之瘟神信仰」, 在於《臺灣民間信仰論集》(臺灣研究叢刊, 臺北市：聯經, 民 72 [1983]),225-234; and Paul Katz 康豹,《臺灣的王爺信仰》(臺北市：商鼎文化出版社, 1997).

[131] CXT 124 福州五靈公 (reading horizontally left to right)：

拜請福州五靈公	神通變化展神光	原是前科為進仕	分行五人察四方
本是同般為兄弟	聽見福州有災殃	福州人民受災厄	五位兄弟心驚亡
心內同心分五方	落井收毒救萬民	不怕生死落井內	大義冤氣冲三界
值日公曹奏上蒼	玉賜瘟部主宰公	救苦救民受災禍	賞善刑惡拿惡人
身受玉皇上帝勅	鎮守福州五靈公	日判陽間救諸苦	夜斷陰司百鬼神
奉勅巡遊瘟瘴事	判斷善惡展威靈	外有五方七煞將	又有皂快六大神
驅瘟逐疫無邊盡	收除五毒不留停	若有不正邪魔鬼	押到壇前化為塵
顯應宣揚振靈公	焚香拜請到壇前	法門弟子專拜請	五福大帝降臨來
神兵火急如律令			

[132] Schipper 1985b:29.

Respectfully we invite the Holy Mother Lin, Queen of Heaven, who saves the people.
Before daybreak, at the crowing of the cock,
She dresses, holding a mirror,
She combs her hair, and makes it into a bun,
in which she puts twelve pins.
.....
The Queen of Heaven journeys over the seas,
She withstands the winds and the storms,
With all her might, she brings help; and then returns to her temple, on Mei-chou.
There, every day, men and women pay homage.
The Holy Mother has appeared there, on Mei-chou.
Her birthday is the 23rd of the Third Moon
Now all here present invite her with a sincere heart.
Saintly and Heavenly Mother, descend!
Quickly, obey the order, in the name of the law![133]

Aside from informing readers that this invocation is addressed to Māzǔ 媽祖, the author does not offer any interpretation of the content, though he rightly emphasizes the binding force of the summons which compels the deity to manifest by force of law. However, Schipper has informed his readers that the invocations "always give a short rendering of the history or myth of the deity concerned [... and] are, in fact, short epic ballads." As this is the only example of an actual invocation in his paper, we can only assume that this quote is meant to demonstrate his assertions.

But where in this passage is there any myth or history of the deity? The first few lines depict the goddess adorning herself. This is the mythic history of Māzǔ? Or some fragment of it? The answer is no, there is no reference to the goddess' mythic deeds here, and the next passage (unique to Schipper's rural source) makes this even clearer, as it describes not the woman Lín Mòniáng 林默娘 acting while alive, but describes the spirit of the deity protecting people at sea and then "returning to her temple," which obviously was only built after Lín Mòniáng's post-mortem

[133] Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical," 30.

deification. This latter passage, like many Minor Rite invocations, depicts the spiritual actions of the deity in the ongoing present, and illustrates the fundamental premises of the religion and of specific cults, in this case that of Māzǔ. As such, nothing in this invocation, including the excerpts quoted by Schipper, is a reference to mythic deeds of the deity's past.

This is an important distinction. In this and other Minor Rite invocations, the spiritual acts of the deity, depicted as transpiring in an open-ended ritual present, are set within the premises of ongoing religious and ritual practices, and are thus accessible to worshippers and ritual experts as part of their devotions, in the same general ways depicted in the invocations. Furthermore, the invocations often exemplify the means whereby religious and ritual objectives are realized. The ways in which worshippers and ritual experts manifest the deities' presence and invoke deities' assistance are not primarily expressed or experienced through mythic narratives, or through performances which narrate such myths, but rather through ritual and devotional acts oriented toward altar-pantheons.

In the Common Religion, the relevance and presence of the gods' past lives and deeds – that aspect of the sacred which Eliade describes as an irruption of history into the present– these are primarily expressed and accessed not through mythic narratives, as important (and ever-evolving) as these may have been, but in the material facts of the gods' living cults: the continuity of their incense fires, their ancestral temples, and their more aged spirit-images. In this context, mythic elements are frequently encoded in the iconography of spirit-images, which, together with temple murals become the main media for communicating mythic symbolism. These material and spatial dimensions of the religion are the primary vehicles whereby a mythic past is encoded and encountered in lived experience. The fact that dramas and narrative fiction only took shape in the

Yuán and Míng –centuries after many of these same cults had become established and widely diffused– further illustrates the primacy of these more material, spatial, and ritual dimensions of lived religion.

Ritual texts like the Minor Rite invocations and their kin are overwhelmingly concerned with achieving ritual transformations and transfers in the ritual present. To this end, most images depicted in the invocations are dedicated to this purpose, and are not primarily concerned with retelling myths, or even alluding to them, though there often are one or two couplets in many invocations that do reference some mythic life-deed of the god, or link them with (an often fictive) native place,[134] but such references are frequently generic, and usually limited to short phrases describing deified ritual experts as learning or practicing ritual. Thus even nominally semi-mythic content is often more involuted reference to ritual.

As we have seen, prototypical, historic Ritual Officers, from Chén Jìnggū to Sā Shǒujiān and the Southern Sòng reformulation of Celestial Master Zhāng as a demon-quelling exorcist, the core myth of these Ancestral Masters always involves their subjugation of demonic or local spirits, who in many cases continue to receive cult, but now as subordinated martial spirits of the Ritual

[134] For example CXT 158 溫元帥 Prime Marshal Wēn, says that he was "originally from Nánshān Yóuxī County," a fictive administrative unit of uncertain inspiration. Moreover, if we read complete invocation, we see how only a single couplet is devoted to identifying the life of the god, and which does not reference any of the narratives associated with the deity. (See Katz 1995) Rather, the invocation proclaims the authority of the god within the standard framework of the Common Religion, i.e. derived from the Jade Emperor, as well as other classic features of the Minor Rite invocation genre: iconographic depiction of the deity (here but a single couplet), descriptions of spiritual actions performed by the god, and first-person language of the deity speaking while "manifest before the altar," while concluding with reference to ritual practice of invoking the god while burning incense.

拜請天廷溫元帥　　神通變化廣無邊　　本是南山遊溪縣　　玉皇賜鞭降下來
身帶金鞭隨身去　　打盡陽間不正神　　吾在壇前威顯現　　捉掌邪魔入酆都
玉皇號令親勅降　　焚香拜請到壇前　　法門弟子專拜請　　溫府元帥降臨來
神兵火急如律令　　(CXT 158 溫元帥)

Method. This fundamental myth points to the historical confrontation and hierarchical accommodation among traditions of ritual experts and local cults. But despite the centrality of such mythic history to these Ritual Method traditions, in the Minor Rite texts and related invocations of the Míng Daoist Canon, references to these pivotal mythic images are either restricted to one or two allusive couplets, or simply absent.

The re-telling of mythic narrative, or even substantially referencing it, were not among the priorities or literary techniques of Ritual Masters –Daoist and more Tantric-Popular– who composed the invocations found in Minor Rite collections and Daoist compendia. Instead, the invocations are clearly structured by the premises and economies of ritual performance, and a construction of ritual efficacy based not on the authoritative precedent of myth, but on the articulation of an embodied paradigm of spiritual power, and evocation of the pantheons which apply such power. This depiction of ritual power is usually framed in relation to practices and premises of the religion in general, including its notions of authority as flowing from the Jade Emperor or other high Daoist symbols. As ritual texts, the Minor Rite invocations are aimed at realizing specific ritual purposes –technical, specific, and general– which are frequently stated in the invocation itself.

If in many cases ritual and narrative drama merge, as in Lǘshān puppet theater, where mythic narrative sometimes serves to establish the metaphors on which ritual efficacy hinges ("just as Chén Jìnggū slew the serpent-demon, so too the ritual performed by her representatives will enact exorcistic healing and protection"), this is not the only kind of metaphor established in ritual performance. In perhaps most ritual, including the Minor Rite and its kin, direct invocation of ritual symbols and depiction of the religion in action form the primary means whereby Ritual

Method traditions construct and communicate models of their own efficacy. Lűshān altar-scroll images, for example, do not depict mythic scenes of Línshuǐ Fūrén slaying the serpent-demon, but rather portray Ritual Masters performing ritual together with the deities of their altar. Soo too with the Minor Rite invocations. The metaphor which asserts ritual efficacy is not drawn from parallels with mythic deeds, but by the example of other rituals, large and small, past and present.

As to this major, widely employed "Lady Mother" 娘媽 invocation which Schipper has cited, the meanings and relevant contexts of the first part, which depicts the goddess combing her hair and adorning herself, are made clearer in light two sources: a different, possibly more "original" version of this invocation preserved in a Lóngyán Lűshān manuscript, and a video made of a Minor Rite troupe in Xiàmén. In this video, the Minor Rite troupe sings the Lady Mother invocation while women adorn, wash, and comb the spirit-images of Māzǔ before they are carried out in procession –which is exactly what the invocation itself describes. The physical acts of gently washing and combing the goddess' spirit-images, and even letting the goddess see herself in a mirror are performed together with the very words of the invocation which describe these actions. The invocation is used to sanctify the very actions which it depicts. Not only are the lyrics of the invocation plainly audible in the video (which is sung in a melody close to that of Ānpíng Black-Head altars), they have been included in the caption below the video. In the full and more widely distributed version of this invocation (HST 1:37 娘媽/娓娘媽), amid depiction of her entire appearance, dress, and cortege, the text first depicts a ritual action whereby the goddess takes off her shoes, which transform into the magic bridge used in Ritual Master ceremony (做橋過限), and then describes the goddess being carried in procession among different villages.

In the final lines of the Táinán-area version (which also appear in the Lóngyán source), the text indicates two paired actions bookending her procession:

去時金針插港口　　返來金花插爐前
When [she] goes, plant [her] golden hairpin by the harbor,
When [she] returns, plant [her] golden flowers before the incense burner.

In the Táinán Black-Head tradition-group, which is clearly derived from the Xiàmén-Tóngān region, this invocation is usually the last of the "Goddess Invocations" 女神, and the penultimate invocation in the standard Invitation of the Spirits. It is the custom of the Héshèng Táng that when it is deemed time to change the "golden flowers" 金花 which adorn the main incense-burner (a near-universal custom in southern China), the new ones are planted in exact sync with the closing words of this invocation which depict this very action.

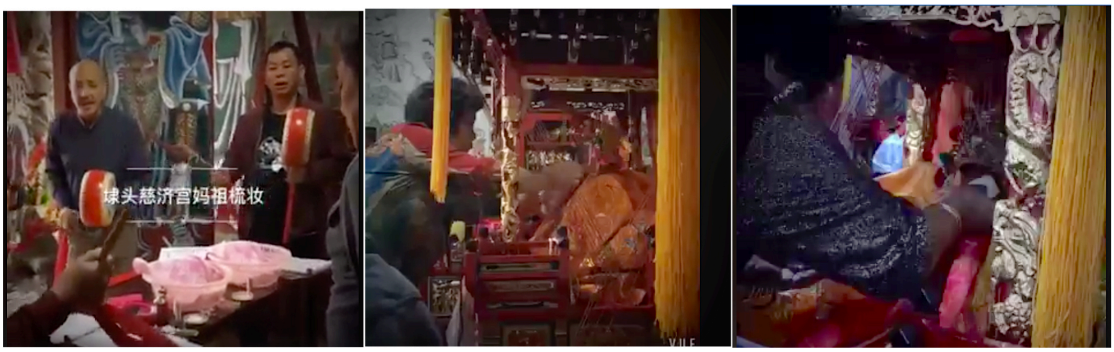

Figure 3.6 Screenshots from a video of the Xiàmén Dàitóu Cíjì Gōng 廈門埭頭慈濟宮 showing a Minor Rite troupe reciting the Níang-Mā 娘媽 Invocation to accompany adornment and combing of the goddesses' spirit-images.[135]

[135] This video, shared on social media, carries a short explanation which reads:
"According to ancient precedent, on the night before Māzǔ [goes on procession] to present incense, [the temple] combs and adorns Māzǔ, simultaneously singing the 'Combing and Adorning Invocation' while combing and adorning Māzǔ." [Then, quoting the opening lines of the invocation:]
[At the] fifth watch the rooster crows, the rooster heralds dawn,
To invite Lady Bwei-Mà to come comb [her hair] and be adorned.
照古例，媽祖進香前夕，為媽祖梳妝～

Hence, there is nothing in this invocation which refers to mythic deeds of the living Lín Mòniáng, nor to actions which established her divinity or proved her powers. Instead, like most Minor Rite invocations, this text depicts ritual actions in an open-ended ritual present, and in this case, the invocation is used to consecrate the very actions described in the invocation itself.

The Lóngyán version of this invocation[136] allows us to understand even better what may have been the original context of the opening lines, and the invocation as a whole. In a sequence entitled "Wánglǎo Paces the Polar-constellation" 王姥步罡, a series of three invocations –all related to similar invocations in Taiwanese traditions– summon the Three Lady Milk-maids 三奶夫人, Madam Chén (Línshuǐ Fūrén), Madam Lín, and finally Third Lady Lǐ 李三娘. As the youngest and most charming, Third Lady Lǐ is also known as the "Seducer of Ghosts" 誘鬼, as she uses her feminine charms to lure demonic spirits into an exorcistic ambush, and Ritual Masters of the Three Milk-maids lineage-group 三奶派 will sometimes dress in feminine clothing, and mimic

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一邊唱梳妝咒一邊媽祖梳妝
五更雞啼雞報曉
請卜娘媽來梳妝
(https://www.facebook.com/100013460854797/videos/2734020264518 24/)

[136] In *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:220-1.This same invocation is quoted in connection with the figure of Wánglǎo as an avatar or symbol of the Three Ladies in *Jiànyáng* 373-4. Many lines from this invocation, including those cited here, and others found in Táinán sources also appear more or less together in a mortuary rite in Jiànyáng (五臺全本 659-660), where it appears this language of grooming and adornment describes the Queen Mother 王母 helping dress and beautify the daughters of the Five Sea-Dragon Kings, though the context of these symbols in the overall rite –in which souls of the dead are led through a series of journeys and transformations– is not entirely clear from either the text or its description in by the authors. (See Yè and Láo's commentary, *Jiànyáng* 77). A connection with the Five Sea-Dragon Kings is referenced in the Lóngyán text, which, in its entirety reads:

焚香拜請，天洋洋，地洋洋。泉州海口李三娘

五更雞啼雞報曉	請起娘媽去梳粧	前頭梳起龍盤髻	後頭梳起鳳凰球
珍珠瑪瑙僚亂掉	長短金釵五十雙	去時金花插海口	轉時銀花插爐前
超執羅群過東海	搖動五海海龍王	龍王借問何家女	我是三宮太姥娘
姥娘發心度弟子	度男度女度兒孫	男女兒孫親傳度	一爐香火萬年興
家家伏祀娘香火	處處安奉我娘身	弟子爐前奉咒請	李三夫人降來臨

effeminate movements in order to impersonate Third Lady Lǐ and her sworn sisters.[137] It is in this context where these lines appear:

> [I] burn incense and reverently summon, Heaven is vast and Earth is vast,
> Qúanzhōu Háikǒu Third Lady Lǐ.
> At the fifth watch the rooster crows, the rooster heralds dawn,
> To invite Lady Mother to go comb [her hair] and be adorned.
> On her forehead she combs a dragon-pan top-knot,
> On the back of her head, she combs a phoenix-ball.
> Pearls and cornelian strands dangling down,
> Long and short golden hairpins, fifty pairs.
> When she goes out, golden flowers are planted by the harbor,
> When she returns, silver flowers are planted before the incense burner.
> 焚香拜請，天洋洋，地洋洋。泉州海口李三娘，
> 五更雞啼雞報曉　　請起娘媽去梳粧
> 前頭梳起龍盤髻　　後頭梳起鳳凰球
> 珍珠瑪瑙僚亂掉　　長短金釵五十雙
> 去時金花插海口　　轉時銀花插爐前

Immediately after this invocation, and unique to the series, a subsequent invocation summons the ubiquitous Lűshān figures "Third Master, Third Boy and Third Master, Third Lad," whose names always appear together and modified by a ritual-action verb, such as "Bind-up the Altar-space Third Master, Third Boy, Bind-up the Altar-space Third Master Third Lad 結界三師三童子, 結界三師三童郎.[138] Here in this Lóngyán text, the ritual-action modifier applied to these figures is derived from the persona of Third Lady Lǐ:

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[137] On Third Lady Lǐ as "Seducer of Ghosts" see *Guǎngjì Tán* 1:50 and n.7.For Ritual Masters impersonating their Ancestral Matriarchs through headgear modeled on the same feminine hairstyle mentioned in the invocation, see image 22 in *Guǎngjì Tán* 1:335.

[138] HST 1:62-66, part of the Summoning of the Camps 調營 sequence.

> Thy servant reverently summons the Lűshān school Summoner of Perverse [entities] and Seducer of Ghosts Third-Master Third Boy, Third Master Third Lad.
> 臣請閭山門下召邪誘鬼三師三童子，三童朗。

Yè Míngshēng and Láo Géwén provide a photograph of Wángláo 王姥 Ritual Masters performing this rite of Wánglǎo Paces the Polar-constellation in which they impersonate the three Ladies by donning feminine clothing and what appears to be wigs with flowers, while applying exaggerated patches of rouge on their cheeks.[139] Thus the performative contexts of this ritual manuscript make explicit what can be inferred from the identity of Third Lady Lǐ 李三娘, namely, that the emphasis on her adornment and coiffure are direct expressions of her exorcistic powers of luring demonic spirits. Given this specific connection between depictions of a lady's toilette and the Third Lady Lǐ, it appears likely that this is the more original context of the invocation and its language, while in the Mínnán littoral, this invocation came to be associated with Māzǔ.

When read (or sung) as an independent text, the Lady Mother 娘媽 invocation presents an image of the goddess readying herself to go out on a ritual procession, complete with a parasol 涼傘, and performing ritual acts (the magical transformation of her shoes into the ritual bridge), and a description of the ritual procession itself. But this reference to ritual is further realized through the three examples we have seen, as Wánglǎo Ritual Masters impersonate Third Lady Lǐ's powers of seduction by adopting feminine guise when performing the rite in question, while in Xiàmén, this same language has been interpreted as a sacred liturgy for the ritual grooming of Māzǔ's spirit-images before going out in procession, just as the invocation itself describes. A similar intuition or tradition has shaped practice in Táinán, where the Héshèng Táng pairs the

[139] *Guǎngjì Tán* Image 36 圖三六，1:337.

language of the invocation with the actions they describe, in this case "planting golden flowers before the incense burner."

From the plain meanings of the text to its interpretations in ritual, the evocative and highly personal depiction of the goddess in the Lady Mother invocation present aspects and actions of the deity related to an open-ended ritual present. The images of religious practices in the invocation refer not to the god's mythic past, but to past, present, and future performances of ritual actions, like ritual processions and the rite of Crossing the Bridge. Such images are a major feature of the Minor Rite and related Ritual Method invocations, which overwhelmingly serve to depict deities and their actions in the ritual present, so as to effect ritual objectives and manifest the deity within the ritual arena. In the process, and unlike invocations of Daoist-brand Ritual Method in the Míng Canon, invocations of the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method often feature content which describes the premises and practices of the Common Religion –temple worship, community rites, and Ritual Master ceremony.

Though in parts of Fújiàn there are indeed ritual narratives including puppet dramas of Chén Jìnggū,[140] and even narrative invocations describing the mythic deeds of Zhāng Fǎzhǔ Gōng,[141] such narrative texts are not found in the Taiwanese tradition, nor in the many Ritual Method invocations preserved in the Míng Daoist Canon. Just as the Minor Rite invocations are not vernacular, they are not narrative, mythic ballads either.

A few examples help clarify these points. Given the richness of narratives surrounding Chén Jìnggū, the great Matriarch of the Lűshān tradition, one might expect to find a reflection of

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[140] On this subject see Bridgitte Baptandier, "Lüshan Puppet Theater in Fujian," in *Ethnography in China Today: A Critical Assesment of Methods and Results*, ed. Daniel L. Overmyer (Taipei:Yuan-Liou Publishing Co., Ltd., 2002): 243-256.
[141] See Wáng Jiànchuān 王見川 2007:29.

these narrative elements in her Minor Rite invocations, of which there are two that circulate among Taiwanese and Pénghú collections. In both we find either (confused) reference to her putative native place, and other lines which relate aspects of her birth, including unique revisions of her family background. The first, Madame Línshuǐ (HST 1:27) reads:

> I reverently summon [native of] Fúzhōu, Pǔtián County,[142]
> Three Palace Matron Ladies of Línshuǐ.
> When the Matron grew to eighteen years of age,
> As a youth she renounced her [secular] life and entered [study of] Yoga.[143]
> General Third-Emperor follows the Lady in ritual,
> General Fifth-Emperor follows the Lady as she goes.
> Perhaps in a cloud riding a warhorse,
> Perhaps in the water commanding heroic soldiers.[144]
> Commanding heroic soldiers, three-hundred thousand [troops],
> General of the Estuary follows the Lady as she goes.
> [If someone] has a mind to summon the Mother, the Mother will know,[145]
> With no mind to summon the Mother, the Mother still comes.
> High mountain and imposing peaks, still able to pass,
> High mountain and perilous peaks, still able to go.
> Journeying to Pǔtián [County], enter into the temple,
> Burn incense, bow and summon, preserve peace and safety.
> Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
> Madame Línshuǐ personally descend!

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[142] Virtually all Táinán-area Minor Rite collections (e.g. CXT 30) share this incorrect association with Pou-saǹ 莆田 (Pǔ-tián) County, instead of the correct Ĝou-saǹ 古田 (Gǔ-tián) County. Whether this is simple confusion prompted by near-homophones, perhaps encouraged by the relative proximity of Pǔ-tián County to Mínnán-speaking areas, or whether a major cultic center in Pǔ-tián County influenced this identification in the text. Again this points to the relatively weak influence of mythic narrative on the Minor Rite invocations, as such narrative sources are unlikely to get this important detail wrong.

[143] The HST line 金吾捨身入瑜珈 appears corrupt, with the "金吾" –evidently a subordinate general (金吳？) mentioned in some other invocations transposed to the head of this line. I have followed the more logical CXT 30 少年捨身入瑜伽.

[144] This appears to be in reference to spirit-soldiers being recruited from water-dwelling ghosts.

[145] In all Táinán-area Black-Head altars, as when using the "Guān-Yīn" melody at the HST, this line is sung in the same distinct way, with the melodic line changing to emphasize "the Mother will know." As different altars of the tradition-group sing this line in more or less the same distinctive way, this detail points to a common ancestor (or, cluster of related ancestors) to the Black-Head tradition group.

Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

臨水夫人

謹請福州莆田縣　　臨水三宮奶奶娘
奶奶年登十八歲　　金吾捨身入瑜珈
三帝將軍隨娘法　　五帝將軍隨娘行
或在雲中騎戰馬　　或在水中統雄兵
統領雄兵三十萬　　海口將軍隨娘行
有心請媽媽也知　　無心請媽媽也來
高山峻嶺也著過　　高山險嶺也著行
行到莆田入廟內　　焚香拜請保平安
弟子壇前轉拜請　　臨水夫人親降臨

Here we have general reference to her life events, most notably entering Yoga 瑜珈 at age eighteen. But most of the invocation is devoted to depicting her subordinate pantheons and spiritual actions, while the final lines describe temple worship, perhaps including pilgrimage to her temple, which here (as in all Táinán and Pénghú sources that I have seen) is mistakenly placed in Pǔtián County, instead of the correct Gǔtián 古田. The lines describing passage over difficult mountains may refer to such pilgrimage, or to ritual procession through rural mountain terrain, or simply to the power of the goddess reaching to difficult places. But aside from the general reference to her study of Yoga and (erroneous) identification of her ancestral temple, no other content here references her mythic deeds, despite substantial narratives circulating in late imperial culture.

The second invocation references the important symbol of the Hundred-flower Bridge, and also raises details of Chén Jìnggū's family, but in ways which reflect local ritual symbolism rather than mythic narrative.

HST 1:28 陳氏夫人[146]

行罡作法陳夫人　　統領天兵百萬人
百花男女橋頭分　　鼓樂吹來臨水宮

[146] Cognate with CXT 29 陳奶夫人.

甲寅元月正月半　　亥時養育外媽親
父是陳家陳長者　　母是西凉蔡夫人
南海觀音來渡法　　老君渡法救萬民
弟子壇前專拜請　　陳氏夫人親降臨
神兵火急如律令

Pacing the mainstay, performing ritual, Madame Dañ [Chén],
Commanding a million Celestial soldiers.
[At the] Hundred-flowers [Bridge] men and women divide at the bridge-head,[147]
Drums and music come blowing at the Línshuǐ Temple.
[In the] Jiǎ-yǐn year, halfway [through] the first lunar month,
Born [at the] hǎi-hour and reared by her maternal grandmother.
[Her] father is the elder Dañ of the Dañ family,
[Her] mother is the Western Palace Madame Tsuà [Cài].[148]
Guānyīn of the Southern Sea comes to [offer] salvation-by-ritual,
Lǎo-Jūn's salvation-by-ritual rescues the common people.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Madame Dañ [Chén] personally descend!

This invocation, which always follows the previous one in ritual performance, frames Madame Chén as a Ritual Master leading spirit-soldiers. In the next line we see how narrative and ritual elements imply one another, as the Hundred-flowers Bridge figures as both an element in Chén Jìnggū's narratives[149] and a major Ritual Master ceremonial motif, in which a bench or other structure is used to create a symbolic bridge; people cross over the bridge and are then given a rite of exorcistic purification[150] by a Ritual Master, Spirit-medium, or both. Here, the invocation describes how "men and women divide at the bridge-head." This is, evidently, a reference to the

[147] CXT 29 has the preferable 白[百]花轎頭度男女 "[At the] White [Hundred]-flower bridge-head, men and women cross over".
[148] Again this identification of Madame Línshuǐ's mother with this goddess Madame Tsuà 蔡夫人 is unique to Black-Head invocations (CXT 29 has 萬夫人). This Madame Tsuà, who is also invoked separately, appears to be the Liúqiú 琉球 goddess of the same name worshipped in the Fúzhōu area.
[149] See Bridgitte Baptandier, *The Lady of Linshui: A Chinese Female Cult*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.
[150] Called "Sacrifice to Remove [Affliction]" ,祭解 tzei gaì.

Hundred-flowers Bridge as the underworld passage over which disincarnate souls must cross to be born into the world, and which, in the *Línshuǐ Píngyāo Zhuàn*, Chén Jìnggū and her sisters watch over, an assignment directly linked with Madame Línshuǐ's partial conflation with the goddess known as the Lady Who Records Births 註生娘娘.[151] Thus in this one couplet, we find an important reference to narrative symbols lined with Chén Jìnggū. However, when asked about this reference, the father and son Ritual Masters of the Héshèng Táng associated the bridge of this line with the ritual bridge that they and most temple-worshippers experience as part of their lived religion.

Then we read details of Chén Jìnggū's parents, which in the Táinán tradition involves an interesting adaptation whereby her mother is no longer lady Gě 葛, as given in earlier sources, but the Liúqiú goddess Madame Tsuǎ (Cài) 蔡, who became widely worshipped in coastal Fújiàn and at times conflated with Māzǔ.[152]The following reference to Guānyīn perhaps reflects the frequent linkages made between these two goddesses in narrative sources,[153] but in a way every bit as general as the subsequent and parallel reference to Lǎojūn. This one, short invocation, then, is noteworthy for the proportion of content related to the life of its subject, but the brief allusions here do not amount to a miniature narrative. Rather, the content –and its interpretations– again reveal a consistent concern with ritual: the hundred-million spirit-soldiers Madame Chén commands, the bridge, understood by contemporary Ritual Masters to indicate the ritual bridge, Madame Tsuǎ,

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[151] See Baptandier 2008:142-165.Though in certain temples, Madame Línshuǐ and the Lady Who Records Births are enshrined together in ways which suggest their co-identity, when the issue is raised, most opinions I have heard consider them two different goddesses, a position reflected in the Minor Rite invocations, where these figures have separate invocations (HST 1:31 註生娘媽, CXT 36 註生娘媽; these two only share a few lines and phrases and are not completely cognate).

[152] On Madame Tsuà 蔡(Cài) see Lǐ Xiànzhāng 李獻璋, "琉球蔡姑婆傳說考證：媽祖傳說の開展に關係して." 東洋史研究, 16(2), (1957)154-185.

[153] See Baptandier, *Lady of Linshui.*

whose subordinate pantheon is prominently invoked and enshrined in the ritual of Building a Bridge to Cross-over Adversity, and even the references to Guānyīn and Lǎojūn, both of whom are depicted as rescuing people through ritual.

A good example of how the Minor Rite genre incorporates mythic or historical narrative into a construction of ritual power can be seen in the invocation for the deified Koxinga (Zhèng Chénggōng), the Holy King Who Opened Tái[wān]:

> I reverently summon the Lord surnamed "Our Country" Who Opened Táiwān,
> Fierce and brave hero, without [equal] in the world.
> Originally a loyal general of the previous dynasty, [he] brought soldiers and horses to hold down Táiwān Prefecture.
> Serving the country with complete loyalty is [priority] number one,
> His name is raised across the four seas and heard under-Heaven.
> I have fierce and brave Official Generals,
> Seizing fiends and capturing anomalies, manifesting true spiritual power.
> Mightily securing Táiwān Prefecture, truly manifesting,
> Take possession of the boy [-medium], manifest and assist with true words.
> Shout one command and perverse demons submit,
> Send out the [spirit-]soldiers' talisman, ghosts and gods are stunned.
> Thy disciple before the altar in concentration bows to summon,
> The Saintly King who Opened Tái[wān] swiftly descend!
> Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!
> HST 1:4 開台聖王
> 謹請開台國姓公　　英雄猛勇世間無
> 元是前朝忠良將　　帶來兵馬鎮台郡
> 盡忠報國為第一　　名揚四海天下聞
> 吾有猛勇諸官將　　拎妖掠怪顯真靈
> 威鎮台郡真顯現　　扶童顯現助真言
> 號令一聲邪魔伏　　兵符發出鬼神驚
> 弟子焚香專拜請　　開台聖王速降臨
> 火急如律令

As a deified historical figure literally synonymous with his conquest of the Dutch colony in Táinán, to invoke Koxinga necessarily involves referencing his definitive historic feat. This the invocation

accomplishes with typical economy in but a single line, while the rest of the text features the spiritual actions of the deity in an open-ended ritual present, complete with first-person language in which the god boasts of his spiritual underlings and their exorcistic prowess. Spirit-possession, always a frequent subject in the Minor Rite invocations, likewise appears here despite the fact that temples to Koxinga rarely have Spirit-mediums which incarnate the deity, an interesting fact which deserves further research.

Thus it is not that the Minor Rite invocations are utterly devoid of mythic or historic allusions (though many are), but that where such allusions appear, most often they form only a small fraction of the content, while the majority is given to depicting the presence of the deity, their subordinates, and their spiritual actions, together with the premises and practices of the religion as a whole. To a certain extent, Schipper also recognized the marginal and meager proportion of mythic allusions in the Minor Rite invocations, but was so invested in his larger argument identifying Popular deities with mythology, that his incommensurate statements on the matter further reveal the fundamental instability of his premise. For example, having already asserted that the Minor Rite invocations "are, in fact, short epic ballads,"[154] and that "Vernacular ritual ballads contain, in long or short versions, the "history" or, better, the myth of the deity invoked," he then admits that

> if the chu[咒 = invocations] refer to mythology, they offer only a little of the information any of the participants would be able to get on a deity from orally transmitted legends. The chu are not intended to convey that kind of information. The vernacular medium appears only to express a form of identification with regional cults and culture. This identity is often implied when people speak of regional cults as "countries." Southern Taiwan is the "country of the Wang-yeh," Fukien is the country of Ma-tzu's kingdom, and so on.[155]

[154] Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical," 31.
[155] Ibid., 33.

But later Schipper again concludes that "the vernacular texts constantly refer to mythology. The invocations recall important elements from the legend of the divinity concerned."[156] While it is true that the invocations occasionally refer to what might be called mythology, it is also true that they "are not intended to convey that kind of information." However, the notion that the invocations refer to a sense of identity with "the country of Wángye," or "Māzǔ's kingdom" is simply a fanciful diversion. Together with his highly impressionistic and often inaccurate descriptions of Ritual Master ceremony in Táinán,[157] it becomes clear that Schipper was led in an unproductive direction by overcommitment to the three keywords of his thesis: vernacular, ballad, mythology. None of these three elements play a significant or definitive role in the Minor Rite invocations or their ritual performance, this despite the profound importance of a historical process, recorded in numerous mythic narratives, whereby the deified human beings and environmental spirits of local society came to be subordinated to the tradition of the Ritual Officer. In ritual performance, such mythic

[156] Ibid., 46.

[157] For example, on page 27 Schipper says that "While performing, [the Ritual Master] holds in his left hand the fanions of the Commander of the Spirit Armies of the Five Cardinal Points, and in his right hand the buffalo horn on which he blows to call on the Gods." And on the next page he states that "All the rituals start with the invocation of the five spirit armies (chao wu-ying or chao-ying [召五營]). Symmetrically, the end of each ritual is composed of the feasting and bestowing of good marks on the soldiers (shang-ping) [賞兵] and sending them back to their barracks. These two parts, the opening and the closing rites of the fa-ch'ang, are always the same and always executed by the Master himself." (p.28) This is simply not the case. What Schipper has described here are the rites of Summoning the Camps, and then the Rewarding of the Troops (犒賞/賞兵), which are not performed every time an altar is opened, but only on specific occasions, and even then the Summoning of the Camps is not performed at the beginning of ritual, but only after the Invitation of the Spirits. Only the bi-monthly Pénghú Rewarding of the Troops begins by launching straight into Summoning the Camps. The Ritual Master does not perform all ritual brandishing the command-flags of the Five Camps; only in the Summoning of the Camps and related rites, such as Settling the Camps 安營 is this the case. These simple mischaracterizations of Ritual Master ceremony reveal that Schipper's knowledge of Ritual Master/Minor Rite performance was both extremely limited and highly impressionistic. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that Schipper repeatedly claims the invocations are "rhymed verses" (29, 37) when in fact the invocations only occasionally rhyme, and in most cases do not. Thus at many levels, Schipper's entire treatment of the subject though at times insightful is also significantly colored by overgeneralizations and mischaracterizations that more precise observation should have preempted.

history and its outcomes are primarily encoded in the spatial arrangements and iconography of spirit-images, and the analogous sequences enacted in the Invitation of the Spirits, rather than in narrative allusions.

One final example will help underscore the nature of the invocations as lyric cameos depicting the premises, aesthetics, and practices of ritual. A typical and concise invocation is one for Chí 池 (Deé) Wángye, one of the most widely worshiped gods in the Mínnán littoral:[158]

> I reverently summon His Highness Lord Deé,
> Head wearing a golden helmet, wearing a dragon robe.
> Honoring an imperial order he goes out on inspection tour, truly manifesting,
> Manifesting in the human realm to save the myriad peoples.
> He received the Jade-emperor's personal conferment of authorized command,
> To manage epidemic diseases and plague spirits.
> I know [who] does good and [who] does evil,
> Offering reward and meeting out punishment, all are clearly distinguished.
> If someone burns incense and comes to worship and summon [me],
> [I will] eliminate disasters, send down blessings, [they will be] forever hale and tranquil.
> Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
> His Highness Lord Deé swifly descend!
> Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

HST1:15 池府千歲

謹請池府千歲爺　　頭戴金盔穿龍袍
奉指出巡真顯現　　顯現人間救萬民
身授玉皇親勅賜　　執掌瘟瘴並疫神
作善作惡吾有知　　為賞為罰皆分明
有人焚香來拜請　　消災降福永康寧
弟子壇前專拜請　　池府千歲速降臨

[158] Chí (Deé) Wángye is the main deity of the Pǔjì Diàn, and as such he is also the "Master of the Precinct" 境主 surrounding the Héshèng Táng. For this reason, Lord Deé was traditionally invoked toward the beginning of the Invitation of the Spirits. Until 2016, this invocation was always recited fourth, after The Holy King Who Opened Taiwan, and before Xuántiān Shàngdì. But because this was not the order in which the invocation appears in the invocation book, this always involved a moment of flipping forward and back, facilitated by sticking folded talisman papers as bookmarks. Thus it was decided to move Chí Wángye's invocation to later in the sequence so as to avoid the need for flipping through the invocation book during ritual performance.

火急如律令

As a typical Minor Rite invocation, here we have first iconographic depiction of the deity, recognition of his authorization from the Jade Emperor, and in this case his appointed control over epidemics, a position directly linked to going out in ritual procession, a central feature of rites for the expulsion of plagues. Moreover, the invocation expresses the most basic principles of the religion: gods are watching over human actions, rewarding the good and punishing evil, while the gods can be supplicated through cultic worship in temples, and in turn they will alleviate misfortune and increase worldly well-being. As simple as such premises may sound, they carry an entire, extended ethos and aesthetic which manifests throughout the spatial, material, and ritual dimensions of the religion. In turn, these same religious principles and ritual logic are voiced throughout the Minor Rite invocations. Finally, we note the absence of vernacular language; even commonplace words like "head" 頭 and "person" 人 are, as always, pronounced in their literary readings.[159]

Vernacular Lűshān liturgical texts in northern Fújiàn

While Schipper's linguistic arguments about the Táinán-area Minor Rite prove to be largely erroneous, several liturgical texts from Lűshān altars in the Jìanyáng area, which had not

[159] In this invocation, the only terms pronounced (at the Héshèng Táng) in the colloquial reading are 香 (hiōĥ) , and the standard 請 (chiāĥ) and 前(jinnǵ), pronounced this way in every invocation (at the Héshèng Táng, but not in Ānpíng, where literary pronunciations are used), as well as the parallel occurrences of 作 (zŭh). The latter instance, however, is another example of how the colloquial pronunciation is at times deemed more natural in a given phrase, and the cadence of the melody, which is filled with added, sung syllables in fixed places. Here, 作惡 in its literary reading would be źok ok̍, which imposes an unnatural stoppage with its entering-tone final "k", whereas the colloquial ends in a vowel (zuĥ) and thereby more easily joins with the following vowel of ok̍ 惡. Hence there are almost always specific performative factors influencing the variable literary and colloquial pronunciations in Minor Rite invocations, in which there is a pronounced preference for the more formal literary readings in most cases.

yet come to light when Schipper wrote his initial study, do feature a modicum of vernacular elements, and though few and far between, the use of such language is notable, and deserves attention given Schipper's vernacular thesis. First, the opening text of the *Praying for Peace Jiào Liturgy Manuscript* 祈安醮儀抄本 begins with the classic phrase "and thus it is said" 且說, and then delivers a fascinating Lűshān cosmological narrative, in which sequences are punctuated by the conjunctive adverb "then" 便, but beyond these examples, few vernacular constructions appear.[160] A similar reliance on "thus it is said" 且說 is found in the *Copper Horse Book* 銅馬本 whose stanzas Yè Míngshēng characterizes as "Ritual Master songs" 師公歌. These short lyrics, which cover a wide range of sacred and secular themes, are both more concretely vernacular and narrative in nature than the Minor Rite-style invocations, but these songs, though set in a religious context, are hardly formal commands meant to make the gods present. Most are not concerned with temple deities, but are mostly adapted from motifs found in the *Journey to the West*, the Yáng Family Generals, and other dramatic narratives and folk-tale symbols. These songs, which represent a kind of religious entertainment genre, rather than illocutionary, ritual formula, are perhaps the most completely vernacular texts of those published by Yè Míngshēng and Láo Géwén, and in their frequent use of colloquial measure words and other vocabulary are almost as colloquial as the Mínnán Ballad-pamphlets.

The best example of a vernacular ritual text in these collections is surely the aforementioned *Nǎiniáng Zōngzǔ* 奶娘宗祖, which features all the classic hallmarks of a Tantric-Popular ritual text, from enumerated sounds of the horn and summons of the Three Talisman Emissaries of the Three Realms, to iconographic language depicting Lűshān pantheons.

[160] *Jiànyáng* 432.

Moreover, the text presents an extended narrative of Chén Jìnggū, and as the work of Ritual Masters in Madam Chén's own tradition, this long and detailed epic should be regarded as among the more important of numerous late imperial narratives of this goddess. While I can only refer to this work in passing, in terms of language this text most fully exemplifies the merger of vernacular narrative with the other definitive linguistic techniques of Ritual Master liturgies.

To a degree, the existence of these vernacular texts affirms some of Schipper's broader hypotheses about vernacular culture, as both the songs of the *Copper Horse Book* and the narrative of Chén Jìnggū in the *Naǐniáng Zōngzǔ* reflect engagement and exchange with other genres of written and performance culture. However, these rich and fascinating texts are not representative of the Jiànyáng (or other) Lűshān tradition as a whole. Other liturgies, even in extended seven-character meter,[161] are not vernacular at all, and the tradition as a whole, from a literary point of view, cannot be characterized as "vernacular."

At a certain level, Schipper's notion of "vernacular Daoism" works best as a kind of metaphor, one which generally indicates the orientation of Ritual Masters toward the domain of temple-cults, Spirit-mediums, and martial ritual involving performance-troupes drawn from humble classes. But when used in this way, as Mark Meulenbeld does in *Demonic Warfare*, the label "vernacular" becomes much like the problematic term "shamanism" when applied to Chinese Spirit-mediums: it serves to render an unknown and yet unexplained phenomenon appear comprehensible and familiar, a conceit further incentivized by the appeal of academically fashionable lingo, which portrays the subject as primal, proletarian, and politically suppressed. But like the problematic discourse of shamanism when imposed on Chinese spirit-possession, when

[161] E.g. 文書全本, Jiànyáng 429-456.

applied to the Ritual Master tradition, the vernacular label serves to blunt more specific and concrete depiction of the traditions under discussion by offering a descriptive designation that in fact does not clearly or accurately describe the subject, and which instead imports a range of inapplicable associations that ultimately lead inquiry away from more fruitful and relevant directions.

While I find many of the specific linguistic and literary premises of Schipper's vernacular thesis to be unsupported, and ultimately less salient than the factors revealed by Ritual Method analysis, Schipper's comparative, structural approach, in which he recognized the complimentary oppositions and interdependent relationships among Daoist and Ritual Master traditions, generally stands as an enduring and constructive insight, and has deeply informed the approach I have taken in this study, where I have taken relationships among ritual traditions to be the key whereby these traditions may be understood. Thus, it is worth reexamining Schipper's table of oppositions formed between Ritual Master and Daoist traditions, to which I have added both annotations, and additions.

Table 3.1 Annotated Expansion Kristofer Schipper's table of the binary oppositions formed between "classical" Língbǎo Daoism and the "vernacular" Minor Rite of the Ritual Master[162] [My annotations added to the section on "Ritual" in brackets.]

Ritual	
"Classical" Língbǎo Daoism	"Vernacular" Minor Rite
Written language (classical)	Spoken language (vernacular)
[In Táiwān and Pénghú, most of the Minor Rite is composed in very simple classical Chinese, with few linguistically vernacular elements. In northern and western Fújiàn, however, many Lǔshān liturgies are composed in genuine, linguistic vernacular language, and as such are quite different from Minor Rite liturgies in Pénghú and Táiwān. At the linguistic level, most of the vernacular coloring flows from the dual pronunciation scheme in Mínnán (and other conservative languages), with the same word or character often possessing both a formal, reading pronunciation and an informal, spoken pronunciation. The Minor Rite mixes both, while the Daoists in theory only employ the first, but in fact more colloquial pronunciations do occur. See Chapter 3.]	
Ritual generally read	Recited by heart
[In practice, Daoists have memorized the most important parts of their rituals, though Schipper's point is the liturgical manual must be placed on the altar and read or followed. Similarly many Ritual Masters and Minor Rite troupes also (now) recite the invocations from liturgical manuscripts. It is unclear when it began to become commonplace for Minor Rite troupes to recite from texts, but this practice has doubtless increased in recent decades]	
Manuscript transmission	Oral transmission possible
[While oral transmission is possible, in fact the Minor Rite is largely preserved and transmitted in texts.]	
Meditation	Trance
[Here, Schipper is lumping Spirit-mediums together with Ritual Masters; by this gesture he reveals that he is not merely analyzing the relationships between Ritual Masters and Daoist priests, but presenting structural relationships formed between the Popular Religion and classical Daoism.]	
Pantheon of cosmic powers	Pantheon of historical deities
[A fundamental distinction between classical Daoism and the Popular Religion.]	

[162] Kristofer Schipper. "Vernacular and Classical Ritual in Taoism," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Nov., 1985), pp.21-57, p.35.

Abstract cosmology	Mythology

[Further articulation of the primary differences between Daoism and the Popular Religion., though the Minor Rite invocations, as well as the construction of Minor Rite and Popular ritual are not primarily expressions of mythology per se as the enactment of the ritual present.]

Bureaucratic metaphors	Military metaphors

[Among the most important of Schipper's observations.]

Elaborate music	Monotonous chanting

[Fair enough, granted the astonishing musical sophistication of Língbǎo Daoist ritual, but there are more musical variations in the Táinán Minor Rite than Schipper was aware, as he was, evidently, only exposed to the Xú Jiǎ 徐甲 tradition-group, whose performances typically feature fewer melodies.]

Texts mainly in prose	Texts mainly in rhymed verse

[Actually, the Minor Rite invocations only seldom rhyme, and as a rule do not, whereas elements of classical Chinese tonal "rhyme" (i.e. 平仄) do figure in Língbǎo liturgy. This misperception of the Minor Rite liturgy as rhymed verse is probably a further consequence of Schipper's incorrect association of the Minor Rite invocations with the truly vernacular and indeed rhyming verse of the late 19th and 20th C. Ballad Pamphlet 歌仔冊 ḡua-â tseih̍ genre.]

Specialists	
Dao-shi	Fa-shi
Hereditary	Vocational
Organized profession	Unorganized; linked to cults
Higher classes	Lower classes
Recognized by the state	Not recognized by the state
"Black-Head"	"Red-Head"
Shoes	Barefoot
Many vestments	Symbolical nudity

[These aspects of attire and style (among other elements) vary depending upon where a particular Ritual Master or altar tradition appears along the axis identified by Davis (2001) that runs between two poles formed by opposed traditions of the Daoist priest and the Spirit-medium. Ritual Masters in closer stylistic and social proximity to Spirit-mediums are more likely to display elements of "symbolic nudity", whereas those with greater affinity to the Daoist-priest end of the spectrum often wear formal robes as well shoes and indeed the elevated shoes of the Daoist High Priest.

Additional elements that I would add to expand Schipper's analysis:

Língbǎo Daoist Ritual	Ritual Master/Minor Rite
• Ritual form premised on imperial court audience ritual, with priest as (divinized) minister, addressing deities who sit as emperors.	• Ritual form premised on local yámen procedure, with priest i.e. Fǎ Guān 法官 as magistrate, thereby personifying the deity.
• Spirits invoked resemble ranked ministers at imperial court.	• Spirits invoked resemble a temple pantheon, sometimes including gods in temple alliance.
• Long invocations of many (scores and hundreds) bureaucratic spirits from high to low, with only 2-3 lines of local gods at the very end (lowest).	• Shorter invocation of Ritual Method and local deities (perhaps three-dozen give or take) with only a few bureaucratic messengers at the very beginning.
• Ritual performances relatively infrequent and expensive.	• Ritual performances relatively frequent and inexpensive.
• Community rituals often involve the entire temple-alliance network.	• Community rituals usually only involve one temple-group.
• Long training period required, minimum 3.5 years and up just for starters.	• Short training period for basic ability to sing invocations.
• Texts mostly in 4 or 5 character lines.	• Texts mostly in 7 character couplets.

"Hybridity" Reformulated

The Lűshān altars of upland Fújiàn, from Jiànyáng to Lóngyán, are noteworthy for the degree to which their ritual texts and liturgical systems have amalgamated Tantric-Popular Lűshān deities with those of Zhèngyī Daoism, so that liturgical sequences present high gods of the Daoist pantheon, such as the Three Pure Ones, the Jade Emperor and Grand Emperor of the Purple Subtlety in direct proximity with figures like Chén Jìnggū and her sisters. Though the Three Pure Ones and the other high Daoist gods are always listed first, and thus stand higher than these representatives of Lűshān Ritual Method, in many instances these high gods are immediately followed by Tantric-Popular symbols. In these regions, Lűshān traditions have become merged with those of Zhèngyī Daoism in both symbolic and social dimensions, so that there are not (or, no longer) separate lineages of Daoists who might otherwise enact a different interpretation of the ritual cosmos in the regional culture. Hence, I believe these and similar traditions, which predominate throughout much of southern China, be regarded as "hybrid," but my usage of this concept differs in important ways from what Schipper meant when he introduced this notion in his article on vernacular Daoism. Where Schipper saw hybridity primarily in terms of his linguistic premise, I believe a more constructive and empirically sound approach is to regard hybridization as involving not vernacular and classical forms of language, but the merger of Daoist and Tantric-Popular symbols in the upper strata of the ritual cosmos.

Schipper's concept of hybridity is not perfectly consistent, a consequence of his vernacular thesis. Where he first raises the idea, like my proposed interpretation, he offers it as a way to understand traditions found in northern Táiwān and elsewhere which present a marked contrast with the arrangement in Táinán, where Daoist and Ritual Master ceremony, as well as the ritual

specialists themselves are "clearly separated." But even here, his idea is that "hybrid forms are encountered in those cases where tao-shih have individually adapted rituals of the fa-shih."[163] Here, he is specifically referring to Red-Headed liturgies of the Táinán-area Língbǎo Daoists, which are purely Red-Headed, Tantric-Popular ritual texts with a brief, Daoist "head" tacked on to the beginning, usually nothing more than an invocation to Pǔhuà Tiānzūn. Perhaps this does describe a certain kind of hybridity, but he then reveals how in fact his notion of hybridity and the vernacular are in fact purely subjective and arbitrary where he reports that

> Hybridization can be shown to have existed much earlier. In the rituals of Thunder magic (lei-fa) that were current in Sung times, we occasionally find rhymed invocations in the vernacular, inserted in a text of classical prose.[164]

In the paragraph that follows, Schipper observes that the ritual experts in the texts he cites (the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*) are called Ritual Masters and Ritual Officers, and in essence points the way toward what would become, in the decade that followed, pioneering work on new forms of Sòng Daoism. But when we examine the four texts Schipper believed to be "rhymed invocations in the vernacular,"[165] three of the four are somewhat similar to Minor Rite invocations –one in particular is a fine example,[166] but none of these have any vernacular characteristics whatsoever. One passage he cites is not an invocation at all but a mnemonic devise for a kind of chiromantic prognostication. Interestingly, this text does have a number of grammatically vernacular constructions, but a closer look reveals it is totally unlike the other invocations, and cannot be counted among them.[167]

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[163] Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical," 36.
[164] Ibid., 37.
[165] Schipper cites DFHY 136, with original pagination 6b, the text he indicates here is found in ZHDZ 37:266.
[166] DFHY 198, ZHDZ 38:118.
[167] DFHY 196, ZHDZ 38:120.

Thus despite having identified at least one highly relevant invocation in the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán*, the specific content, language, and form of this and other texts were not identified as the basis of analysis, as instead Schipper's dedication to an ill-defined notion of the "vernacular" obscured the actual nature and characteristics of the texts in question. What this reveals is that at one level, Schipper's concept of the "vernacular" simply meant virtually anything in seven-character couplets, regardless of its language or content. This would in part explain his conflation of the Minor Rite invocations with the highly dissimilar Ballad-pamphlets, and why he repeatedly labels texts as vernacular even when there is no actual vernacular language to be found

The other significant example of hybridity Schipper gives is the Lűshān liturgy from Zhānghuà published by Liú Zhīwàn, in which a series of standard Daoist invocations (in four-character stanzas) have been placed near the beginning of the ritual sequence.[168] In fact, this same situation, with the same Daoist invocations, is found with but small variations in the Táinán-area Bǎo-ān Gōng tradition-group, in the section comprising items 3.1-3.6 of the Chéngxīn Tán volume.[169] The adoption of widely circulated liturgical material in this case seems more like a case of simple borrowing or ritual augmentation, as the addition of these common invocations involves no symbolic modifications made to the ritual system. But for Schipper these formula stood out not just because they are Daoist, but because he believed their language to be different, as he says that

[168] See Liú Zhīwàn,「閭山教之收魂法」, 223.

[169] As Ritual Master Lín Dòuzhī himself believed the Bǎo-ān Gōng Minor Rite tradition had its roots in Lùgǎng, in Zhānghuà County, this shared ritual sequence may in fact point to a relationship between the Zhānghuà and Bǎo-ān Gōng tradition, though some of the invocations, notably for the Black Killer 黑煞 are slightly different.Nevertheless, in both, these Daoist invocations (淨咒, 淨口咒, 淨身咒, 淨天地咒) are immediately followed by a Daist-style invitation of spirits, which is to say a name-list of deities, beginning with Daoist high gods and descending from there. In this regard, the Táinán CXT invitation of the spirits is much more clearly structured and more comprehensive, while the Zhānghuà text is somewhat garbled, with one of the Three Pure Ones, Língbǎo Tiānzūn appearing several lines down, after several Spiritual Officers 靈官.

following this section "the remainder of the ritual is in vernacular," when in fact there is no more vernacular language here than in the Táinán Minor Rite, which is to say virtually none.[170] Here, Schipper is clearly using "vernacular" as a label for the Ritual Master system, without regard for the actual language involved. While for all practical purposes there is no vernacular language to speak of here, the symbols of the Ritual Master pantheon, together with its martial ethos and violent imagery have simply been camouflaged under his vernacular label, thus masking the concrete symbols and actual literary characteristics from which a more constructive analysis can be made.

Thus I propose to shift the criteria of "hybridity" away from unsupported notions of classical and vernacular language, and instead take specific symbols and their relative positions in altar-pantheons and liturgical texts as the primary basis for identifying cases of hybrid, Daoist/Ritual Master traditions. This is an important and much-needed concept in the study of ritual traditions in the field, as a large proportion of the Daoist ritual traditions that researchers have studied in contemporary southern China exhibit the characteristics that I would label as hybrid, in which the Ancestral Masters and other deities of the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method –deities and symbols conspicuously excluded from all but the lowest reaches of canonical and conservative Daoist pantheons– have become placed in direct proximity with the high gods of the Daoist inner altar, while subsequent levels of the altar-pantheon are likewise populated with an amalgamation of Tantric-Popular and Daoist symbols, giving rise to a highly composite pantheon.

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[170] Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical," 36, n.50. There is one occurrence of 了 (liaù) as past-marker (Liú 1974:229) used in the formula to activate 敕 the substitute body; likewise in Táinán the one place such usage occurs is in the formula to consecrate the salt-and-rice. In both cases the 了 is used in exactly the same way: to differentiate the object before and after being ritually activated.

This kind of symbolic merger is likely an expression of a social convergence, in which Zhèngyī and Lűshān lineages ceased to be separately transmitted and instead became conjoined, so that in regions where such hybrid lineages prevail, typically there are few if any "pure" or non-hybrid Daoist lineages which have resisted merger with their Lűshān competitors. Moreover, this situation again indicates how the establishment of a separate "religion" for such Ritual Masters, on the claim that they represent something other than Daoism, is highly problematic.With the partial exception of the strongly Buddhistic (but still heavily Daoist-influenced) traditions in Shòuníng,[171] all of the Lűshān traditions studied by Yè Míngshēng place the high gods of Daoism atop their pantheons, while still more Daoist deities, symbols, and ritual conventions permeate their liturgical systems. Hence a strategy bent on ignoring or minimizing this condition of hybridity likewise cannot adequately explain traditions found in the field. And lastly, a clarified concept of hybridity helps further illuminate what is distinctive about the particular Mínnán traditions preserved in Táiwān, Pénghú, and elsewhere, in which the persons and traditions of the Ritual Master and Daoist priest have maintained much greater distinction.

[171] Whose texts are presented in the *Lìyuán* 梨園 volume.

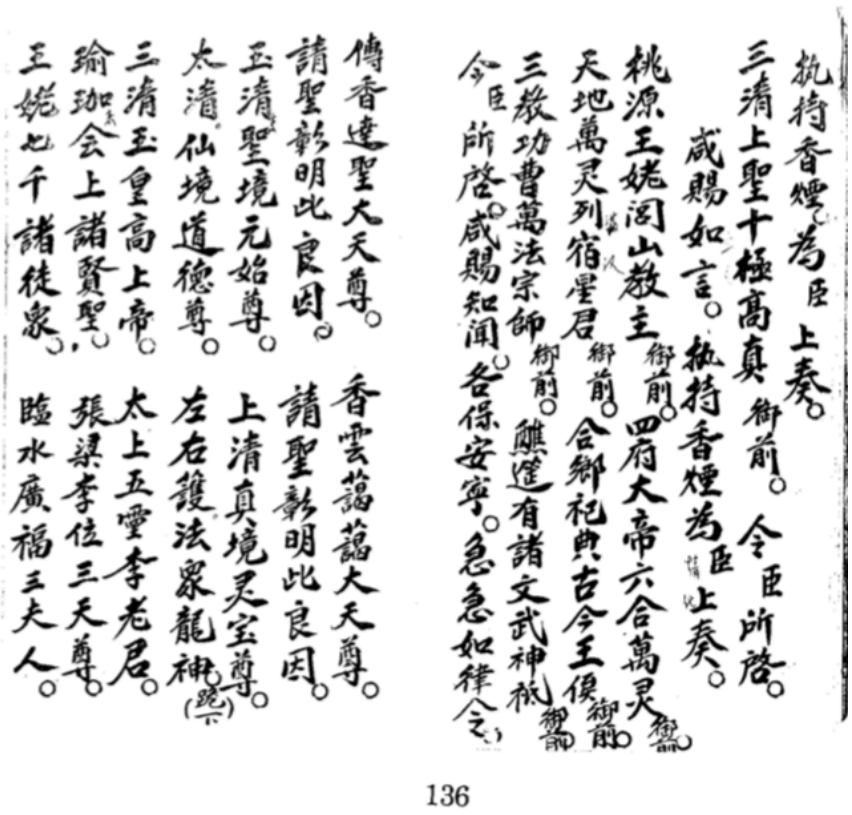

Figure 3.7 A typical hybrid pantheon from a Lóngyán liturgical text[172] showing the Three Pure Ones 三清 immediately followed by Wánglǎo, Master of the Lűshān School 桃源王姥閭山教主, while on the left a similar sequence is repeated, with the Three Pure Ones (individually named) and the deified Lǎozi followed by the "All the Saints of the Yoga Assembly" 瑜珈會上諸聖賢 , the Lűshān gods Zhāng, Liáng, Lǐ 張梁李三天尊, and then the Three Lady Milk-maids.

Conclusion

Thus while Schipper attempted to link the traditions and symbols of the Ritual Master to "vernacular" language, as I have argued here there is insufficient grounds to support this metaphor, while moreover, even when taken as a metaphor to indicate a more Popular cultural milieu, labeling these traditions as "vernacular" misses their most salient characteristics, while obscuring the major continuities shared across Tantric-Popular and Daoist forms of Ritual Method.

[172] 通表一宗, *Guǎngjì Tán*, 2:136.

The Minor Rite invocations and other liturgies are not "vernacular," they are Ritual Method: lyric invocations that reflect the specific nature and performative contexts of Ritual Method ceremony, in which pantheons of local deities and martial subordinates are summoned in order to apply or threaten exorcistic violence on the bodies of spiritual entities, so as to effect ritual transfers and transformations. This ritual paradigm hinges upon the construction of bodies for spirits of all kinds, including the deities and spirit-soldiers commanded by the Ritual Master. Hence, the stanzas dramatize the manifestation of these deities within the ritual arena in dynamic, embodied images. Moreover, as ritual texts, the invocations describe ritual actions and their spiritual dimensions, and do not, primarily, concern themselves with myth. Though in some regions and traditions there are longer, more narrative texts performed by Ritual Masters, in the historic invocation genre as seen from sources in the Daoist Canon down through the late imperial Minor Rite stanzas, mythic allusions account for at most a tiny fraction of the content, and in most cases, there simply is none, as such mythic content is not necessarily relevant to the performance of ritual and attainment of ritual objectives. Mythic relations in which two or more symbols have undergone historic reconfiguration tend to be encoded in spatial relationships among spirit-images and their iconographic conventions, rather than this type of ritual formula.

Chapter 4 Sources of the Ritual Master Tradition: Historical Literature of the Wū 巫 in Late Imperial Fújiàn and Táiwān

Introduction

In the networked home and temple altars of the Common Religion, ordinary people on a daily basis burn incense, pray, present offerings, and seek guidance through divination. Many will mark the passage of traditional time through fortnightly offerings, with still others made at certain annual holidays and ancestral death anniversaries. But for the more important ritual acts that reproduce the cultic elements of the religious system, and which enact transformations over people, spirits, places, and objects, a ritual expert is required. With the possible exception of funerals, where lay and monastic Buddhist performers occupy the more inexpensive sectors of this ritual marketplace, in Táinán and Táiwān generally, rituals which serve to reproduce and maintain the institutions of the religious system itself, and which enact transformations over people, places, spirits, and things are primarily conducted by a trio of ritual experts whose negotiated spheres and performance traditions embody the historical symbiosis between Daoism and local cults.

Most ubiquitous are the Spirit-mediums (dāng-geê 童乩, jī tǒng 乩童) who become possessed by, and when in trance *are* the living gods of the Common Religion.[1] Then there are Ritual Masters 法師(ǒhuat-sû/fǎ shī), called "Red Head" 紅頭 (āng taú/hóng tóu) priests for the color of their traditional headscarf, a habit which may well descend from the ancient Nuó

[1] As spirit-possession is fundamentally a collective endeavor, discussion should include here the "Head-of-the-table" 桌頭 (đuh taó/zhuō toú), the main individual who interprets the speech of the Spirit-medium or the writing of the planchette to the people present at the séance. In many cases this is a Ritual Master, but where there is no in-house Ritual Master, this role falls to one or more members of the temple community. Though their ritual function requires skill, experience, and tact, the position of "Head-of-the-table" is more of a function per se, carried out in normal conversational language, and is thus less of a ritual performance in the way Spirit-mediumship and formal ritual involve special stereotyped language and action clearly demarcated as different from ordinary speech and behavior.

exorcism.[2] The Ritual Masters serve and command the gods, together with their subordinate spirit-armies, in order to effect ritual transfers and transformations, and to impose exorcistic power over spirits of the dead and the environment that cause disease and misfortune among the living. Then there are Daoist priests 道士(ǎuh-sū/dào shì), who in some contexts are called "Black-Head" priests in contrast to the "Red-Head" Ritual Masters.[3] By virtue of their text-intensive tradition, supra-local orientation, and historical ascendancy over the religious culture, Daoist priests control the commanding heights of the ritual marketplace: large-scale community rites, and more prestigious funerals.

In the greater Taiwanese region, custom imposes an ambivalent division of labor between Ritual Masters and Daoist priests in which only the latter are authorized to perform the "grand rites" 大法 of the high Daoist Offering, or Jiào 醮, and salvation of the (recently departed) dead.

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[2] See the chapter on Historical elements of the Ritual Method synthesis.

[3] In most sources the Red Head/Black Head dichotomy is both confused and confusing. The primary source of confusion is the somewhat unique designation used in northern Táiwān, which has been erroneously imposed on the religious culture as a whole. In northern Táiwān, Daoists who exclusively perform funerary rites are labeled "Black Head," while Daoists who exclusively perform temple-based and healing rites are called "Red Head." In Táinán this distinction is made in two different registers, neither of which is related in any way to the segmentation of funerary performers: in its primary and most broadly used form, this distinction is simply between Daoist priests (Black Head) and Ritual Masters (Red Head). However, among Táinán-area Ritual Master/Minor Rite traditions, the Xújiǎ 徐甲 lineage-group of the Bǎoān Gōng is normally called "Red-Headed" in contrast to the older tradition-group established in Ānpíng and Táinán known as "Black Head," a distinction reported in the late-Qīng/early Japanese-era gazetteer *Miscellaneous Records of Ānpíng County* 安平縣雜記, discussed below. The oft-seen definition (e.g. EOT 488-90) which alleges that the Red-Headed Ritual Master "does not perform ceremonies for the dead" (EOT 488) is simply false. The photo included (EOT 489) in the EOT entry "*hongtou* and *wutou*: 紅頭，烏頭, "Red-head" and "Black-head" where this assertion is repeated in fact shows a Ritual Master in the Dōngyuè Diàn 東嶽殿 performing just such a rite for the soul of the deceased in the underworld. Other, similarly Red-Headed mortuary ritual includes Smiting the Blood-pan 打血盆, performed for women and infants who died in childbirth, and the central Táiwān-specialty "Sending-off the Meat-dumpling" 送肉粽, performed in the wake of a suicide. Likewise, in southern Táiwān there is an entire specialized tradition of Red-Headed Ritual Masters called "Song for Drawing-out the Dead" 牽亡歌 (ǩam-ṭ̍ong guâ) performed at funerals, whose most critical performance involves leading the coffin out of the house for its journey to burial or cremation 出山. In Fújiàn, Lűshān Ritual Master traditions practice an extensive repertoire of funerary 功德 ritual. Hence this confusion of broader Red Head traditions with the particular division of labor in northern Táiwān has led to widespread mischaracterization of the Ritual Master tradition.

By contrast, the Ritual Masters' liturgically simpler repertoire are deemed "Minor Rites" (xiǎo fǎ 小法, ho̍h-à 法仔), and this context-dependent term "Minor Rite" serves as the most common name for the Ritual Master tradition itself. Despite the diminutizing connotations, however, Ritual Masters themselves and society at large use this term 'Minor Rite' without any sense of deprecation, and we find a similar expression (法呀) used in Lǘshān liturgies of northern Fújiàn.[4]

The juxtaposition between the Língbǎo Grand Rite 靈寶大法 and the (broadly-defined) Lǘshān 閭山 Minor Rite has traditionally been taken by scholars to respectively indicate contrasting realms of large-scale community ritual on the one hand, and small-scale client oriented rites on the other. And while Ritual Masters and Minor Rite troupes routinely perform such rituals of healing, protection, and fortune-boosting for individuals, families, and temple communities, in the regional religious system and likely other regions as well, it is the Ritual Master and Minor Rite troupe who primarily perform the rituals necessary for the reproduction and maintenance of the cultic elements of the Common Religion itself. As prominent symbols of the Tantric-Popular Ritual Master tradition have become embedded elements in the structure of the temple-cult, while rites proper to the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method are deemed mandatory to the consecration of new temples and the upkeep of the all-important spirit-soldiers, this symbiotic arrangement between more Tantric-Popular Ritual Master traditions and temple cults cannot be a recent development, but must have arisen from a long history of Ritual Masters operating within and officiating over the nexus of local temple cults.

[4] In these traditions the term used is written "法呀". See *Jiànyáng* 358, 585, 674, 729, 736.

Throughout southern Táiwān, while the gods' birthdays often ritual feature performances by Daoist priests (or scripture recitation groups) and a Ritual Master or Minor Rite troupe,[5] the Minor Rite in its various configurations is arguably the predominant form ritual responsible for the annual and periodic ceremonies that celebrate gods' birthdays and major life-events, from the purification of new temples to the animation of spirit-images, pilgrimage to ancestral temples, and rites for the spirit-soldiers that guard the temple precinct.[6] But this community orientation of Minor Rite/Ritual Master ceremony is usually circumscribed within a single temple's precinct or altar community. Except for the largest of periodic ritual processions, and rites whereby large rural temples recruit new spirit-soldiers from the souls of the dead, and process with their allied temples to the waterside, where Spirit-mediums and a Ritual Master perform to this important rite,[7]

[5] But usually not both Daoist priests and scripture recitation groups 誦經團; in part for sheer performative economics, there is usually not space in a temple for both these two to perform together, and as the Daoist priests likewise recite scriptures during their one-day Birthday Jiào, there would be no benefit to a redundant pairing of these two. Instead, the scripture recitation groups constitute a much less expensive alternative in many ways to the Daoists' daytime rite. However, the performance of a Daoist Birthday Jiào (or scripture recitation performance) and Minor Rite Rewarding of the Troops 犒賞 often parallel each other, and do not overlap in either space or purpose, as the Rewarding of the Troops is always performed outside the temple itself.

[6] Let me clarify here that from Pénghú to Táiwān, the term "Minor Rite," 法仔/小法 is the primary term used by practitioners and society at large to refer to the traditions of what I label as the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method, and is synonymous with what in most parts of Táiwān is labeled "Red-Headed" 紅頭. However, the term "Minor Rite" to some relative degree is used more often to describe the Minor Rite troupe 法仔團/小法團 configuration, in part probably because the troupe members, as opposed to the Ritual Master, have been traditionally labeled "Minor Ritualists" 法仔. Most professional or semi-professional Ritual Masters perform with but one or two accompanists rather than a whole troupe so as to reduce the number of people that would need to be paid in a hired performance, whereas this is not a consideration in temple-based troupes where usually fees are not charged. The actual traditions performed by the independent, (semi-)professional Ritual Master and the temple-based Ritual Master with Minor Rite troupe are the same, though individual Ritual Masters operate within a performative context conducive to even greater idiosyncrasy. Hence in Pénghú and southern Táiwān, the terms Minor Rite and Ritual Master tradition are essentially synonymous, but the former *tends* to indicate the troupe configuration in indigenous parlance, but this distinction is by no means absolute.

[7] I note that the Xuéjiǎ 學甲 rite of "Going up to Báijiāo"上白礁, one of the "Five Great Incense" 五大香 festivals of Táinán county falls into this category, as it is both centered on just such a rite of gathering spirit-soldiers, and led primarily by a Ritual Master, with Daoist priests performing an interestingly inverted secondary role. On the rite of summoning spirit-soldiers from the water, see Zhōng Xiùjuàn 鍾秀雋 (2013) .

ceremonial cycles which last more than one day and mobilize a temple's extended precinct alliance network are all forms of the Daoist Jiào.

Hence there is a discernable hierarchy among this trio of ritual experts, linked with the nested dimensions of temple precinct organization. In this historically negotiated arrangement, with its roots in the Daoist imperative to subjugate local gods to the Way of the Celestial Master, the Daoist clergy occupies a position of authority and prestige which reflects the elevated status of their supra-local, cosmic, and sidereal pantheon, whose deathless divinities preside over and above the deified human beings and environmental spirits of the Common Religion. But the Daoists are ultimately dependent, economically and socially, on temple communities centered upon their immanent Popular gods, deities made manifest by Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters.

In Táiwān, this triune configuration of ritual experts was first noted in 1915 by the Japanese ethnographer Marui Keiji in his *Outline of Old Customs according to the Religion of Táiwān*,[8] where he presents a chart that depicts a branching, tripartite division among the ritual experts of the Taiwanese Common Religion. In addition to the slender and independent category of Buddhist monastics 僧侶, (whom Marui lists as performing a number of mortuary and healing rites),[9] most of the chart is given to depicting a linked but separate pair formed by Daoist priests

[8] Marui Keji 丸井圭治郎, *Outline of Old Customs according to the Religion of Táiwān*《舊慣ニ依ル臺灣宗教概要》. Táiwān Central Government 臺灣總府, 1915, p. 28. This particular chart would be further elaborated in later works, first the better known 1919 publication, *Táiwān Zōngjiào Diàochǎ Bàogào Shū* (*Report on Investigation into Taiwanese Religion*)《台灣宗教調查報告書》, 第一卷。(台北: 捷幼出版社, 大正 8 年[1919]): p.95. Yet another version of this chart appears in Liú Zhīwàn's 1974 monograph (p.209), where the traditions are placed in a vertical hierarchy, and divested of the revealing indications of linkage and affinity that Marui provides, and which I explore in this chapter.

[9] It is unclear whether the ritual experts Marui here indicates are truly Buddhist monastics or rather priests of lay or syncretic traditions such as the Shik Gaŏ 釋教, who dress as Buddhist monks and perform funerary rites with substantial elements of Daoist and Ritual Method content. Nevertheless, the proportional depiction of Buddhism in the chart in question conforms with the situation in contemporary Táinán and Táiwān generally, which is to say that monastic Buddhism is not integrated into the system of altars that comprise the universal

on the one hand, and another group whom Marui calls the Wū-xí 巫覡, borrowing the ancient usage that distinguished female Wū 巫 and male Xí 覡 to refer to the kinds of ritual experts that most medieval and late imperial sources usually call Wū 巫. But this term Wū is difficult to define and translate, a problem expressed in Marui's chart.

Under the category Wū-xí furthest from the Daoist priests we find figures whom Marui calls "Female Wū" 女巫, who principally specialize in channeling the spirits of clients' dead relatives and historically have operated primarily in their client's homes, and are not based in temples.[10] To the right we find (primarily male) "Spirit-mediums" (literally "youth diviners") 童乩, who, when fully possessed, *are* the living gods of the religion, and unlike the former "female Wū" are attached to particular temples, and specific deities within those temples.[11] These two we may confidently translate and understand as Spirit-mediums –ritual specialists whose performance involves an intersubjective trance-identification with a spirit.[12]

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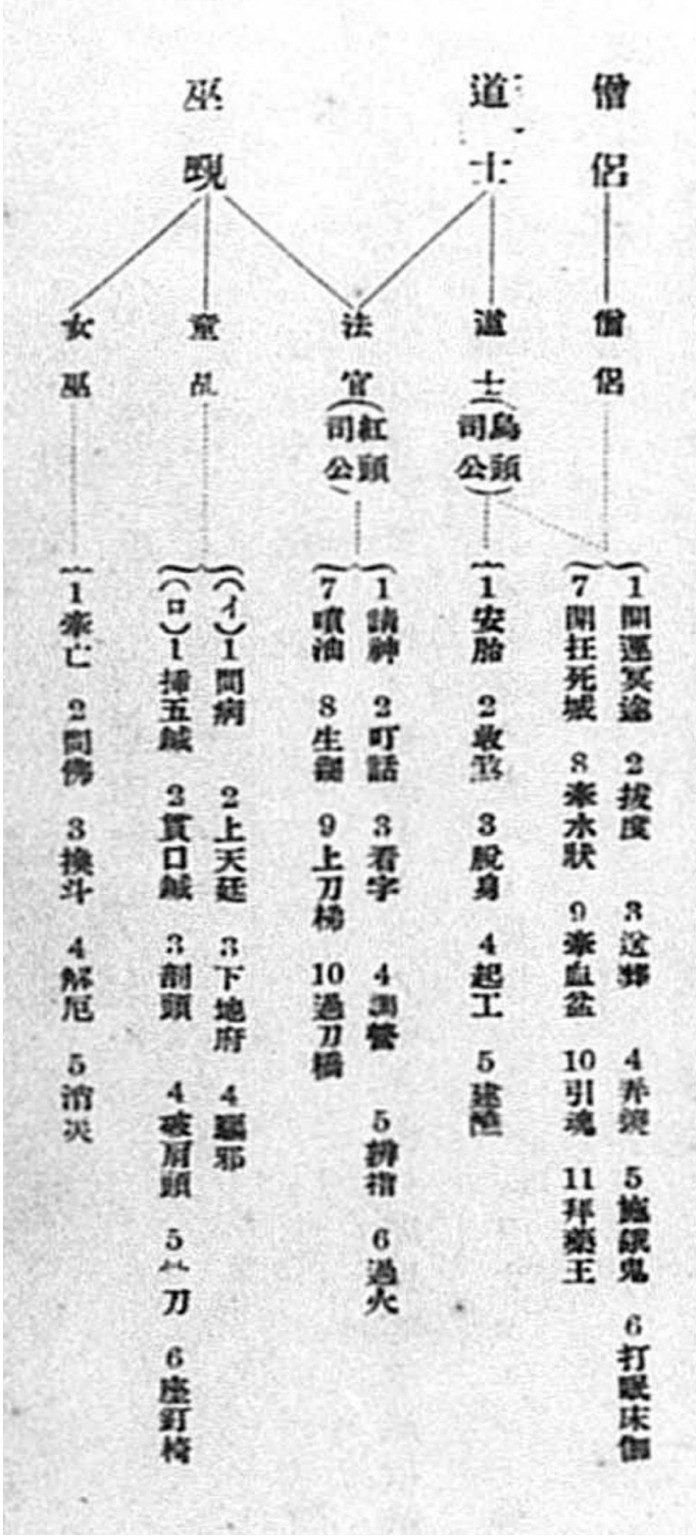
religion of the society. Instead, contemporary monastic Buddhism and its lay organizations constitute an archipelago of independent religious subcultures, and the same can be said of Sectarian groups like Yīguàn Dào and the latter-day manifestations of the so-called "Vegetarian Sects" 齋教. On Buddhism as the odd-man-out in Taiwanese religion see Robert P. Weller, *Unities and Diversities in Chinese Religion*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987.

[10] On these female mediums, usually called "Puppet-Aunties" 尪姨, see De Groot *Religious System of China*, 6:1332-1339.

[11] Marui here uses the Taiwanese-language term đang-geê ; the Mandarin equivalent is 乩童 jī tǒng. Often temples will have two or more Spirit-mediums, each the medium of a particular deity worshipped in the temple.

[12] Importantly, the segregation of these two different kinds of "Wū" in society –the "Female Wū", usually called Āng-yí 尪姨, and ordinary Spirit-mediums 乩童 flows from the structural oppositions formed among ancestors (the specialty of the female Āng-yí) on the one hand, and gods 神明 on the other.

Figure 4.1 Marui's chart of Taiwanese religious experts and their ritual repertoire.



But grouped together with these two kinds of mediums as part of the Wū-xí tradition, and shown as adjacent to and connected with Daoist priests, we find the "Ritual Officer" 法官, an alternate name for the Ritual Master that also means "judge," or perhaps "Ritual Magistrate", and reflects the political metaphor of the local yámen, whose symbols and procedures inform aspects of Ritual Master ceremony. But as the chart indicates, the Ritual Officer is fundamentally oriented toward the cultural world of Spirit-mediums, while also exhibiting degrees of proximity and exchange with that of Daoist priests.[13]

If we take the ritual experts listed in this chart and replace them with their respective ritual traditions, then we have Daoist priests representing classical Daoism –the religious movements descending from Zhāng Dàolíng 張道陵 and his Way of the Celestial Master, while the various classes of Wū in essence denote the Common Religion. These two distinct religious strata, though, are again shown to be linked by the figure of the Ritual Officer, whose overall historic tradition I have presented here as constituting a Ritual Method movement composed of two "hemispheres," one more formally "Daoist," and one more overtly "Tantric-Popular." Where labeled as Wū and more fully integrated with temple-cults, such Ritual Masters are more likely to practice traditions which I have labeled Tantric-Popular in nature, even where these have evolved degrees of hybridization with Zhèngyī Daoism. While I have designated these two hemispheres to account for the resonant distinctions among Daoist and, strictly speaking, non-Daoist streams of ritual practice, a tendency toward bifurcation is notable throughout the Ritual Master phenomenon.

[13] On the dual orientation of the Ritual Master toward both the Spirit-medium and the Daoist priest see Davis , *Society and the Supernatural,* 26ff.

Davis identified this tendency toward stylistic bifurcation as arising from the Ritual Master's historic and ritual role as a mediator between the opposed figures of the Daoist priest and Spirit-medium, who form two poles of an axis along which Ritual Master traditions take shape. Depending upon their social and cultural proximity to one pole or the other, Ritual Masters and their performance traditions will tend to resemble the personal appearance and performative style of either Daoist priests or Spirit-mediums. This pattern is prominently visible in the Ritual Master traditions in and around Táinán, while in its basic outlines, it is also represented in Marui's chart, where the Ritual Officer is shown to stand between Spirit-mediums and Daoist priests. And though the Ritual Officer is here classified with the Wū, Marui has added a line to indicate linkages among the Ritual Officer and the Daoist priest.

In modern Táiwān, when people seek the services of religious experts, in most cases it is usually not the elite priesthood of classical Daoism to whom they turn, though to be sure there is an ancient and still vital tradition of Daoist priests dispensing talismans for healing, protection, and general fortune-enhancement. But in what must be a large majority of cases, most people seek out the Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters of Marui's putative Wū-xí tradition, the ritual experts of the Common Religion. This being the case, many Daoist priests, particularly in rural townships find a substantial portion of their work in performing Red-Headed Ritual Master ceremonies for individuals and temple communities.

Marui's chart also attests to this prevalence of Red-Headed, or Tantric-Popular Ritual Master ceremony in the early 20th C. Of the rites listed for all the different ritual performers – including Buddhist monks and Daoist priests– depending on just what Marui was referring to, between half and three-quarters of the rites he enumerates are all Red-Headed ceremonies normally associated with the Ritual Master. Hence, while the Daoists may control the largest and most expensive rites at the apex of the cultural system, the Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums occupy the broad base of the religion, the foundation of the system upon which the superstructure of classical Daoism has stood since the Sòng dynasty.

In using the terms Wū and Wū-xí to label both Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters, Marui was following the long-running precedent of Sòng and late imperial Chinese literature. Before the Sòng, the term Wū is essentially synonymous with Spirit-medium, and includes those said to "see" ghosts and spirits, and speak for them.[14] Occasionally, other kinds of religious experts, including those of ethnic minorities may also be labeled Wū, but such cases constitute statistical outliers, and can usually be distinguished from the Spirit-mediums (and later, Ritual Masters) whom the term Wū is primarily meant to indicate.[15] In point of fact, more detailed historical sources and modern fieldwork have not revealed any broad class of other ritual experts labeled Wū who are neither Spirit-mediums nor a variety of Ritual Master. Moreover, by careful attention to the nature of ritual experts labeled Wū, can we escape the black box of "shamanism", which not only mischaracterizes the phenomenon of spirit-possession, but would in a stroke completely obscure from view the entire history I present in this chapter, in which Ritual Masters are consistently labeled Wū from the Sòng to the 20th C. Nor should scholars, faced with a multiplicity of referents to the term Wū, retreat into an equally obfuscating position of merely regarding the Wū as a "pluralistic" 多元 category, capable of yielding no clearer contours or proportion beyond an indeterminate pluralism.

Instead, by carefully observing the contexts of ritual performers labeled as Wū in historical literature, and where appropriate, bringing to bear insights afforded by fieldwork and other sources, the natures of the Wū in question can often be deduced, though in many cases, their identity as either Ritual Masters or Spirit-mediums is perfectly explicit. What such a context-sensitive approach –and the sources themselves make clear is that prior to the Sòng, and the odd outlier notwithstanding, the term Wū primarily means Spirit-medium, but following the appearance of the Ritual Master in the religious landscape, the terms Wū and Wū-xí underwent

[14] E.g., *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* j.283. In classical texts which offer explanations of the Wū, causing spirits to descend and then take possession of and speak through the medium were regarded as the definitive characteristic of the Wū. The *Shuōwén Jiězì* gloss reads: "Wū , an 'invoker'. A woman who serves formless [spirits], and by dancing causes the spirit to descend." 巫，祝也。女能事無形，以舞降神者也. A passage from the Wén Héng 文衡 likewise specifies the communicative aspect of the Wū 's possession trance: "Ghosts and spirits use the mouths of Wū to inform people. (Original comment): The spirits of dead people speak through the mouths of Wū." 鬼神用巫之口告人. (Comment):死人魂，因巫口言. (論衡校釋, 卷 26, 實知 78).

[15] Later sources like those examined below, as well as modern fieldwork have not revealed any broad class of other ritual experts labeled Wū who are neither Spirit-mediums or a variety of Ritual Master, or who are not indicated in Marui's chart.

mitosis, as it were, and came to primarily indicate both Spirit-mediums and the new figure of the more Tantric-Popular Ritual Master.

The fully Daoist Ritual Master (or Ritual Officer), however, is clearly not included in this rhetorical category. Daoists are definitely not Wū, even where Daoist Ritual Masters of the Sòng practiced forms of Ritual Method which may at times have been hard to distinguish from that of the Daoists' more Popular competitors. In point of fact, from the 2nd C. inception of Celestial Master Daoism through the latest texts of the Míng Daoist Canon, the Wū – first as Spirit-mediums and eventually Ritual Masters as well– are nothing less than *the* arch-nemeses of Daoists, practically synonymous with demons incarnate, with denunciations and ritual combat directed at Wū throughout Daoist literature. While the term Wū is in part a rhetorical construct laden with cultural oppositions to Daoists in particular, and which at its absolute broadest can be taken to mean ritual experts of the Common Religion, for the term Wū to have acquired a dual primary reference to Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters after the 12th C. is not merely the consequence of Daoists and other authors stretching the term to serve as a ready, catch-all, pejorative label for an expanding roster of Popular ritual experts. Rather, the consistent and specific usage of the term Wū as a label and category arises from the substantial linkages between Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters, the two primary ritual experts of the Common Religion in southern China.

At the most basic level these linkages are historical, as the Ritual Method synthesis and the figure of the Ritual Officer emerged directly from patterns of interaction, opposition, and exchange among Spirit-mediums, Tantric adepts, and Daoist priests. This historical legacy has endowed the Ritual Master tradition with a number of distinctive features, from performative specialization in facilitating possession-trance, to the bodily practices of streaming hair and bare feet that signal identification with a deity, not to mention a fundamental orientation toward the ritual world of the temple cult and its concern with controlling spirits of the dead and the environment. Moreover, many ritual implements used by Ritual Masters, such as straw brooms and mats, salt and rice, chickens and ducks, these household goods turned ritual implements are indicative of a Popular domain of ritual quite distinct from the courtly ritual culture of the Daoist priesthood, and point to a substantial legacy of fully Popular culture, perhaps linked to the ancient Wū, which has become emblematic of Ritual Master ceremony.

Ultimately, it is the Ritual Master's specialization in controlling spirits and Spirit-mediums in a performatively compelling manner, together with the adaptable pantheon-template intrinsic to these traditions, that have enabled practitioners of the Ritual Method movement to gain predominance throughout the religious culture of southern China and its diasporic communities. Hence a series of historical elements have endowed the Ritual Master with a tradition which features frequent cooperation with Spirit-mediums, and often degrees of resemblance with them as well.

In the anecdotes from Hóng Mài 洪邁 that Davis examines, despite stylistic variations among rural and urban Ritual Masters, both are characterized by the ritual employment of Spirit-mediums, including the ritual induction of spirit-possession in either a medium or the troubled patient themselves. Hence, a consistent element of spirit-possession in the Ritual Master's partner –but not the Ritual Master themselves– runs through the different social expressions of the Ritual Master tradition. This proximity to but freedom from possession-trance is a definitive trait of the Ritual Master, who, as a master of spirits is empowered to control gods and their mediums, with such empowerment flowing in part from techniques of liturgical identification with the Ritual Master's main deities.

In all forms of Ritual Method, we find frequent depiction of techniques whereby the Ritual Master visualizes or invokes their Ancestral Master, spirit-general, or other empowering deity, and then through formula, visualizations, or bodily techniques of resemblance, identifies him or herself with this spirit. As a general technique, this method of liturgical identification (usually called "transformation of the body, or spirit" 變身/變神 in Daoist texts) represents one of the main elements of Tantrism which has shaped the Ritual Method synthesis. Often, techniques of

liturgical identification involve first-person language in the liturgy whereby the Ritual Master speaks in the voice of the god. Examples of such language can be found in texts of every kind of Ritual Method tradition, from Minor Rite invocations, Fujianese Lűshān liturgies, and such canonical Daoist sources as the *Compendium of Daoist Ritual Method* 道法會元 (*Dàofǎ Huìyuán*), where one text exemplifies this technique:

> Let all the generals protect my body...I am the Lord of the Purple Subtlety, [I] with authorized command summon the spirits of the Thunder Department...Thunder booms and lightning is dragged down to the altar-space. I am the great commanding general...
> 諸將護吾身...吾是紫微君，敕召雷部神...雷轟電掣到壇廳。吾是總統大將軍...[16]

In the Lűshān liturgies of Jiànyáng 建陽 we find similar examples, and while employing phrasing common to Daoist "transformation of the body" 變身 techniques, the symbols are entirely Lűshān, or Tantric-Popular in nature:

> Visualize my body, the spirit Pángǔ is my body.
> 存吾身，盤古神是吾身。[17]

> Visualize my body, imagine my body. My body is not a common mortal body. The spirit-king Lóng-ruì [=Lóngshù, i.e. Nāgārjuna] is my body.
> 存吾身，想吾身。吾身不是非凡身[sic]。龍瑞神王是吾身.[18]

[16] DFHY 76 三段咒, ZHDZ36:473.
[17] *Jiànyáng*, 291, 盤古神咒.
[18] *Jiànyáng*, 854，from the *Niáng Niáng Yèyóu Gōng Fǎshū* 娘娘夜遊宮法書. I have read the phrase 吾身不是非凡身 as if there were no 不, so that it means what such phrases are intended to mean in Daoist liturgies, as to read it literally would mean the opposite: "My body is not any non-ordinary body", when clearly the "non-ordinary" nature of the adept's transformed body is the whole point of the technique.

Similar examples of both Daoist and Tantric-Popular orientations abound. This kind of liturgical rather than psychic identification with a spirit –and the differing dimensions of control involved– distinguish the Ritual Master from the Spirit-medium. The Spirit-medium is subject to a theoretically involuntary process, and is controlled by the spirit which possesses them, so that their entire subjective identity is ceded to the deity in a highly social context. During the carefully demarcated duration of the possession-trance, the other participants then regard the possessed medium as the god and not the person who serves as medium. The perceived authenticity of a Spirit-medium and their manifestation of a deity depends directly on their surrender of agency to the spirit, and their amnesia or professed unawareness of what transpires under possession.

By contrast, the Ritual Master is a master of spirits who wields control, and employs liturgical identification and other performative techniques in order to enhance their control over spirits, including those possessing the medium. But having identified themselves through formula or aspects of resemblance with their Ancestral Master (or other deity), the other participants do not then regard the Ritual Master as having become another being, different from the man or woman who serves as priest, nor is the Ritual Master then capable of spontaneous, intersubjective discourse as the object of their liturgical identity. When the Ritual Master speaks in the voice of the deity, as happens in many invocations, such language and the premise it implies are limited to the formalized liturgy itself. Thus I have called this technique liturgical identification, as it is entirely embedded in the relatively invariant structures of ritual performance.

While the liturgical identification employed by the Ritual Officer differs substantially from the psychic, social, and intersubjective transfer of identity practiced by the Spirit-medium, iconic aspects of the possessed medium's bodily practices –streaming hair and bare feet– were at an early

stage adopted into the Ritual Officer's methods of liturgical identification as outward and visible signs of the ritual expert's divination. The classic streaming hair and bare feet of the Spirit-medium are markers of the deity's manifestation, and as I have argued elsewhere, are likely drawn from ancient notions of how ghosts and the dead (especially suicides) appeared.

As a bodily practice, these iconic accents serve to indicate the presence of a deity through resemblance, and by means of this principle of resemblance, the Ritual Officer's techniques of liturgical identification have further developed to include movements, dress, and iconic postures to variously resemble the deities of the Three Altars, the stylized, feminine gestures of the Three Milk-maids 三奶, or the iconography of spirit-images on the altar. In Táinán, Ritual Masters of the Héshèng Táng/Pǔjì Diàn altar-traditions have been known to don long wigs during important rituals in order to resemble Lord-of-the-Rite Zhāng 張法主公. In these ways Ritual Masters resemble not only the prototypical Ritual Masters who head their pantheons, but in many cases the same gods whom the Spirit-medium embodies. And where Ritual Masters perform with greater stylistic and cultic proximity with Spirit-mediums, these two may so resemble one another that even informed observers might have difficulty distinguishing them.

Ritual Masters not only perform in tandem with mediums, in traditions nearer the Spirit-medium pole of the Daoist-medium axis mentioned above, they may well resemble Spirit-mediums by taking off their shirt and shoes and practicing techniques of self-mortification, from flagellation with spiked clubs to piercing the cheeks and forearms with skewers. Conversely, in a pattern visible from rural southern Táiwān to Jīnmén and Singapore, Spirit-mediums will also resemble Ritual Masters: brandishing whips, tying on a red headband, and with fanions of the Five Camps in hand, perform rites for the Five Camps that are usually the exclusive specialty of the Ritual Master.

Through this institutional proximity and stylistic resonance there runs the thread of identification with a spirit by trance-possession or liturgical identification. Both denote the empowerment of the ritual performer through personification of a deity.

In the Minor Rite invocations, the first-person language of identification often appears alongside language depicting spirit-possession, and many of these invocations are still used as inducements to facilitate descent of the god into the medium.[19] In this way, the language of the Minor Rite texts evokes both modes of identification, trance and liturgical. Thus a certain ambiguity in the ritual texts gives voice to how the identification of ritual performers with deities forms a central and mutually reinforcing element shared by the linked figures of the Spirit-medium and Ritual Master, both of whom many sources, right up through the 20th C., label as Wū –the primary ritual experts of the Common Religion who, in differing ways, personify the gods they serve.

Hence where sources from the Sòng onward use the term Wū to indicate both Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters, there are numerous and interconnected reasons for this dual reference. Foremost are the historical roots of the Ritual Method movement in patterns of exchange among Daoists, Tantric adepts, and Spirit-mediums, a long-term process which both produced the ritual means for collaborative ritual performance, and bequeathed the Ritual Master with the medium's bodily practices of streaming hair and bare feet as visible signs of the performer's

[19] For example I have seen (in different contexts) both HST 1:7 Nézhà Tàizǐ 哪吒太子 and HST 1:19 Zhāng Gōng Dà Fǎzhǔ 張公大法主 used to facilitate spirit-possession, both of which feature first-person language of identification, which in itself forms a prominent characteristic of the Minor Rite genre as a whole; language referencing spirit-possession is even more widespread throughout the genre. Many other invocations to specific deities are still used to encourage these deities to take possession of their Spirit-mediums; I mention these two examples for their employment of first-person language, which thus creates a suggestive ambiguity among liturgical identification of the Ritual Master (and Minor Rite troupe) reciting the invocations, and the Spirit-medium who incarnates the deity and does indeed speak as the deity when in trance.

deification. This cluster of factors – frequent ritual proximity, degrees of visible resemblance, ritualized personification of deities, and a shared basis in the realm of Popular cults have together shaped the Ritual Master tradition in such a way that indigenous authors from the 12th C. onward have consistently understood its more Tantric-Popular domain to be a development within the cultural tradition of the Wū.

The Sòng-era mitosis of the Wū

Among the earliest and most important Sòng sources to use the term Wū to indicate Ritual Masters is the well-known passage attributed to Bái Yùchán 白玉蟾 (1194-1229?),[20] among history's most influential Daoists, and who was active in the same regions of Fújiàn that will concern us in this chapter. In a conversation preserved in the *Recorded Sayings of Haǐqióng, the Realized Man Bái*, a disciple asks the master about the Wū :

> Yuán Cháng asked, "What does the ritual method of the Wū consist of? No one can discern whether it is orthodox or perverse." [Bái Yùchán] replied saying, "the ritual method of the Wū began with King Sā-tǎn[21] and was transmitted to King Pángǔ, again passed down to the Asura King, then further transmitted to King Wéituó-shǐ [Veda the Dharma protector?], King Chángshā, King Toú-tuó, the Ninth Lad of Lűshān 閭山九郎, the Seventh Lad of Mèngshān, the Tenth Lad of Héngshān, the Marquis Zhào Third Lad 趙侯三郎, the Second Lad Zhāngzhào 張趙二郎, and after this [no one] knows the number [of their generations]. In former times, as for the ritual method of the Wū some called it the method of Pángǔ; it was also called the method of Spirit Mountain 靈山. Moreover there was the ritual method of Lűshān 閭山. In reality, they are all one Wū ritual method 其實一

[20] Lowell Skar (EOT 203-205) believes Bái had passed away before the compilation of his teachings in 1237, but Qìng Xītài (1994:123-4) offers evidence he believes demonstrates that Bái lived at least to the 1250s and possibly into the early years of the Yuan (1279+), thus living anywhere from sixty to ninety years, rather than the thirty-five or so given by the death date of 1229.

[21] The identity of 娑坦王 remains unclear, but Schipper wonders if it could in fact be "Satan." See TC:928. On pronunciation of 娑 (suō) as "sā" see DDB "娑".

巫法也. This method of the Wū has indeed mostly stolen the teachings of Tàishàng [Lǎojūn, the deified Laozi][22], thus in their ritual method they frequently invoke the sayings of Tàishàng. Most laughably, in the past, beneath the talismans of the Wū 's ritual method, they used cursive-script to write "Tàishàng in Heaven", but today's Wū don't know the meaning of the characters, and just say, "the great king is in the mysterious". Haha!

元長問曰：巫法有之乎?其正邪莫之辯也。答曰: 巫者之法, 始於娑坦王,傳之盤古王, 再傳於阿修羅王,復傳於維陀始王,長沙王,頭陀王,閭山[山在閭州][23]九郎，蒙山七郎, 横山十郎, 趙侯三郎,張趙二郎,此後不知其幾。昔者巫人之法, 有曰盤古法者, 又有曰靈山法者, 復有閭山法者, 其實一巫法也。巫法亦多竊太上之語, 故彼法中多用太上吭語。最可笑者,昔人於巫法之符下, 草書太上在天, 今之巫師不知字義, 却謂大王在玄。呵!呵![24]

First, this passage definitively connects the term Wū with Lűshān 閭山, which endures as the most widely used symbol labeling the Tantric-Popular Ritual Master tradition itself. Moreover, most of the deities listed in this 13th C. source still appear in the liturgies, talismans, and ritual scrolls of the Lűshān altars studied by Yè Míngshēng and John Lagerwey in western Fújiàn.[25] Even the practice of writing "the great king is in the mysterious" 大王在玄 that Bái Yùchán found so laughable is still visible in a talisman preserved in Lóngyán Lűshān texts.[26] Hence we have, at least in the upland traditions studied by Yè Míngshēng a depth of historical continuity with the tradition as observed in the Southern Sòng.

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[22] Here, a metonomy for the teachings and techniques of Daoism.
[23] Note appears in original text.
[24] *Recorded Sayings of Haǐqióng, the Perfected Man Bái* 海瓊白真人語錄 j.1, ZHDZ 19:548.
[25] See *Guǎngjì Tán*, 292.
[26] For a reproduction of this talisman see Yè Míngshēng 葉明生 and Liú Yuán 劉遠，「福建省龍巖市蘇邦村上元建醮大醮與龍巖師公戲」,《民俗曲藝》(臺北市：施合鄭基金會，1997 [民 86]):314. Yè states that aside from King Shā-tán 娑坦王 and King Wéi-tuó-shǐ 維陀始王, the rest all appear in the liturgies and scrolls of the Lóngyán Lűshān altars.

Once might suspect that Bái used the term Wū as simply a pejorative label, to belittle these Popular and syncretic performers who were to some degree imitating and competing with the traditions he advocated as orthodox. In fact, this passage begins with a question seeking clarity as to whether the Ritual Method of the Wū "was orthodox or perverse," suggesting an uncomfortable proximity with the very traditions that Bái himself was promoting.

Such unsettling confluences among Wū-ist and Daoist ceremony also prompted the 13th C. ritual purist Jīn Yūnzhōng 金允中(fl. 1225) to single out the encroachment of "heterodox" practices into Daoist ritual for condemnation. In the sixth chapter of his vast ritual compendium *Shàngqīng Língbǎo Dàfǎ* 上清靈寶大法, Jīn delivers a wide-ranging excursus on ritual form, method, and theory in which he first affirms the exorcistic utility and cosmological basis of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ –the prototype of Daoist-brand Ritual Method, and then stresses the importance of conservative social norms –prayers for the state ruler and ancestors, and the values of filial piety, loyalty, and ritual propriety as "the root of the Teaching of Liturgy" [i.e. Daoism] 科教之本. Against this portrait of Daoism as the very embodiment of orthodoxy, Jīn condemns the appearance of Popular ritual practices within Daoist circles:

> Nowadays there are those who instruct people in the ways of sinister Wū-xí, making "prayers of suppression" by night [and other] heterodox arts. Such is not the standard of the Retreat and Offering altar-mat...
> 今乃教人妖邪巫覡之態，夜為厭禱，不正之術，既非齋醮壇席之格.[27]

[27] 上清靈寶大法 j.6, ZHDZ 34:37.

A few lines further down, Jīn bemoans the appearance of Daoist priests, evidently in the Jiào altar, performing as Red-Headed Ritual Masters:

> The gates of the Great Dào are perfectly correct and free of perverse [heterodoxy]. Thus how can it be that there are those who wrap their heads in red cloth, waving swords and scimitars?
> 大道之門戶至正無邪。又安有紅繒包首操刃斫器之事哉？[28]

This is perhaps the earliest account of Red-Headed priests since medieval documentation of the Núo performers, and after the 10th C. emergence of Ritual Method Daoism into the historical record. Moreover, Jīn mentions these highly martial Red-Headed priests in practically the same breath with "sinister Wū-xí," who are performing ritual prayers of a type which, evidently, had intruded into the Jiào altar itself. Such ritual would seem to indicate priestly officiation, and though it could conceivably have involved Spirit-mediums, in light of the second passage specifying Ritual Master performance, Jīn appears to use the label Wū-xí to indicate these same Red-Headed Ritual Masters, just as Bái Yùchán does. Thus we can see that following the emergence of the Ritual Method synthesis, the term Wū was no longer simply synonymous with Spirit-mediums, but had become a standard label for the new figure of the Ritual Master as well.

Both Bái Yùchán and Jīn Yūnzhōng refer to these Wū/Ritual Masters in strongly disapproving terms that reflect both their response to contemporary developments and the ancient antagonism between Daoist priests and the Wū/Spirit-mediums of local cults. But in Bái Yùchán's *Recorded Sayings*, the way Bái's interlocutor poses the question, the term Wū appears to follow a common usage independent of Daoist polemic, and does not appear to be simply a derisive label. Despite the purely negative connotations attached to the term in canonical Daoist sources, in

[28] 上清靈寶大法 j.6 ZHDZ 34:38, mentioned in TC 1076.

which the Wū are a source of misfortune, black magic, and illness to be overcome by ritual means, in other kinds of sources, including late imperial Lűshān liturgical texts, the term Wū is employed to unambiguously label the Ritual Master tradition in a way that is fully affirmative.

Embracing the Wū label in narrative and liturgical texts

Echoing this Sòng precedent, Ritual Masters of the Lűshān rite are categorized as Wū in a Míng narrative, the *Fully Illustrated Record of the Sea Voyage of Manifesting Ritual Power and Subduing the Serpent* 全像顯法降蛇海遊記傳, an account of Chén Jìnggū 陳靖姑, aka Línshuǐ Fūrén 臨水夫人, the great Ancestral Matriarch of the Tantric-Popular Ritual Master tradition. But unlike Sòng Daoists, this text proudly claims the term Wū as an unproblematic name for the very tradition the text seeks to glorify:

> Ever since Heaven and Earth were established, the people have been secure in their occupations, and the Four Teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism and the Wū have been passed down under heaven. Confucianism originated with the saint Confucius, who lived in the human realm and by filial piety and loyalty practiced his teaching. Buddhism originated with the World-honored One, who lived in the western lands and by upholding pure conduct 持齋 practiced his teaching. The Dào originated with Lǎozi, who lived in Mount Zhōngnán and by self-cultivation practiced his teaching. The Wū originated with the Ninth Lad, who lived on Mount Lű 閭山, and by Ritual Method 法 practiced his teaching.
> 自天地開闢之後，人民安業，以儒，釋，道，巫四教傳於天下儒出自孔聖人，居人間以孝悌忠信行教；釋出自世尊，居西境以持齋行教；道出老子，居鐘南以修煉行教。巫出自九郎，居閭山以法行教.[29]

[29]《全像顯法降蛇海遊記傳》，reprinted in《台灣源流》24期(12/2001):.89. On this source see Hú Hóngbō 胡紅波，「乾隆刻本《全像顯法降蛇海遊記傳》的發現,」成大宗教與文化學報，第二期(12/2002):31-35. This particular source is in no way related to another, similarly named Míng vernacular work *Record of a Sea Journey* 海遊記.

This sympathetic narrative source not only equates the Wū with the Ritual Master tradition, but seeks to give the socially ubiquitous Ritual Master tradition its rightful place alongside the familiar Three Teachings of China's "great traditions." Moreover, the unnamed figure of the Ninth Lad is again confirmed as the mythic patriarch of the tradition, as Bái Yùchán reported some three or four centuries earlier, an attribution repeated throughout Fujianese Lűshān liturgies.[30]

Most remarkably, though, Lűshān liturgical texts from Jiànyáng use Wū as a term of self-reference, or autonym, for both the Ritual Masters and tradition itself. In the first section of the *Ancestral Teaching of the [Madame] Breast-maid* 奶娘宗祖(*Nǎiníang Zōngzǔ*), a major text of the tradition that presents a lyric ritual drama of Chén Jìnggū, and framed in the classic Lűshān motif enumerating blasts of the "dragon horn," the liturgy declares:

> Summoning the Milk-breast spirit to the incense-table, when the dragon horn blows, respond to [the practitioner of] the Wū tradition.
> 召請神奶赴案香，龍角吹時應巫家[31]

Another Jiànyáng liturgical text, the *Ritual Repentance of [Madame] Breast-maid* 奶娘法懺 (*Nǎiníang Fǎchàn*) uses the term Wū to identify Chén Jìnggū 陳靖姑 with a broader movement of exorcists. Framing the ritual setting in the tradition's sacred landscape, the Ritual Master recites:

> Within the boundary of Gǔtián [county], in the Temple of Madame Línshuǐ, Madame "Favorable Virtue," I take refuge in the teaching. I request that you descend upon our ritual gathering, and alone summon the Platform Official to give us divinatory signs, and speak of the Wū-woman journeying to Jiāngnán.

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[30] This source is ostensibly a Wànlì period （1573-1620）composition, but the extant text is a Qīng Qiánlóng （1735-1799) reprint.

[31] *Nǎiniáng Zōngzǔ Shàngběn* 奶娘宗祖上本, *Jiànyáng* 509.

古田界內。臨水夫人宮中。順懿夫人。我等皈依。願臨法會。獨召台官占兆。為言巫女往江南。[32]

The following section of the same text states that at age sixteen, the precocious young Madame Línshuǐ "wished to assemble the Wū and eliminate demonic hauntings"念欲集巫除鬼祟.[33] While here the great Matriarch of the tradition is labeled a Wū, not by outsiders but from within the tradition itself, other ritual texts describe the Ritual Masters themselves as Wū. In one mortuary rite, the liturgy describes its performance as involving the "summons of a Daoist Wū" (or perhaps "Daoists and Wū") 伏請道巫.[34] In documents for rainmaking rites of the same tradition, amid strongly hybrid pantheons with high Daoist gods, the memorial refers to the Ritual Masters performing the rite as belonging to "the Wū stream [or, 'kind']" 巫流.[35] This same phrase is used in the Lìyuán 梨園 Lǘshān traditions of Shòuníng County 壽寧縣, where a seven-character stanza for the "Rite of Sending-off the Spirits" 送神科 ends with the line "Disciple of the Wū-stream preserves peace-and-safety"巫流弟子保平安."[36]

Thus with Lǘshān liturgical texts employing the term Wū to label its founding figures, its ritual experts, and the tradition itself, such usage is clearly neither pejorative nor meant to indicate Spirit-mediumship, but instead designates the tradition of the Ritual Master, specifically linked with the symbols of Lǘshān and its cultic figures. In terms of its intended referents, such usage is essentially the same as Bái Yùchán's Southern Sòng excusus on the Wū.

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[32] *Nǎiniáng Fǎchàn* 奶娘法懺, *Jiànyáng* 462.
[33] *Jiànyáng* 463.
[34] *Jiànyáng*, 66.
[35] *Jiànyáng*, 875.
[36] *Lìyuán*, 549.

Documenting local religion: the gazetteer discourse of the Wū in Fújiàn and Táiwān

In local gazetteers and anecdotal literature of Fújiàn and Táiwān there are numerous references to Wū, their ritual activities, and social contexts. A close reading of these historical sources reveals that the term Wū is not used in an indecipherably vague way to dismissively conflate a mixed bag of ritual performers, but is instead used in varyingly ambivalent and specific ways to indicate the same primary dual reference to both Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters that the Japanese ethnographer Marui Keiji employed in the early 20th C. In fact, these local gazetteers, together with certain works of the "anecdotal records" 筆記 genre, represent the main body of textual evidence to record the presence and activities of late imperial Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums. Thus a study of these sources is essential to the history of these ritual practitioners in these regions, and I have limited the scope of my study to Fújiàn and Táiwān not simply to make a broad topic manageable, but because these are regions for which we have fieldwork (beginning with De Groot) and in many cases Ritual Master liturgical texts, all of which substantially clarify many aspects of the religious culture. Moreover, these sources reveal many details of social context surrounding religious practices, and express the complex attitudes of their elite authors who in many cases complain that even among the elite, a range of religious practices and customs deemed unorthodox by Confucian puritans were in fact commonplace, while confessing that the ritual programs advocated by the Neo-Confucian agenda were not broadly accepted.

To begin, let us examine a text of the Republican era which exemplifies this more specific usage that has, by the early 20th C., enjoyed consistent and widespread use for eight centuries. Like many gazetteers of the Republican era, the 1941 *New Chōng-ān County Gazetteer* 崇安縣新志 offers a degree of ethnographic detail surpassing most earlier gazetteer observations, with

information on traditional religious culture now categorized under the then-fashionable heading of "Superstition" 迷信. In a series of enumerated sub-topics, number four is entitled "Wū-xí":

> The common people put their faith in Wū, and so professional Wū are flourishing. Ritual aversion of disaster for small children is called "Crossing the Gates"; ritual removal of sickness is [variously] called "Burning the Road-head," "Cursing the Earth," "Sending off the Straw Boat," and "Setting-free and Producing a Substitute." For those who die in madness, or die while healthy and strong, their funerary rites are called "Putting out an Altar." The Wū take Chén Jìnggū and Chén Hǎiqīng of Gǔtián County as their [Ancestral] Masters. They carry out their practices amid the sound of drums and gongs, with a red head, bare feet, and a ritual robe, their hands holding a bamboo whip and a copper bell, and with the resounding call of their horn they [summon deities] to descend into Spirit-mediums 降僮. Most come from outside the city, as the people of the city do not make this as a profession.[37]
>
> 巫覡
>
> 俗信巫，故業巫者盛。小兒禳災名過關，病而禳之曰燒路頭，曰罵土，曰送茅船，曰做釋出替。狂而死狀而死者追薦之曰出壇。巫以古田陳靖姑陳海清為師。有所為輒於鑼鼓聲中。紅頭赤腳法衣，手持竹鞭銅鈴角聲嗚嗚然降僮。多來外城，邑人無業此者。

This brief passage may be the most detailed depiction of Ritual Masters in any primary source since Bái Yùchán's *Recorded Sayings*, and its description of Ritual Masters in the far northern borderlands of Fújiàn generally holds true for those of southern Táiwān as well. Aside from the Ritual Master's iconic appearance –a red head and bare feet, with whip, bell, and horn– the ritual repertoire mentioned here is likewise consistent with the findings of other studies, including the children's rites of "Passing the Gates" 過關 (Baptandier 1984, 2008),[38] while Yè and Lagerwey find a rite of "Sending-off the Straw Boat" 送茅船 was formerly practiced in nearby Jiànyáng, but has

[37] 民國三十年 (1941) 崇安縣新, j.6, 迷信, item n.4.
[38] On these rites also see *Guàngjì Tán* 4, 11,51;*Jiànyáng* 127, with the ritual manuscript on 770-779.

not been performed for decades.[39] The reportedly rural basis of these Ritual Masters is also noteworthy, though likely peculiar to the era (if not simply erroneous), as numerous other sources confirm that Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums were native to walled cities throughout the region.

Of mid-Qīng gazetteers, the Qiánlóng 19 (1754) *Fúzhōu Prefecture Gazetteer* 福州府志 is a particularly rich source for the religious culture in general, and the Wū in particular. This relative wealth of information is due in part to the fact that like most prefectural and provincial gazetteers, this work assembles passages from older county, prefectural, and provincial gazetteers. But references to Wū are probably also more numerous because the city of Fúzhōu and the territory of Fúzhōu Prefecture are home to the ancestral temple of Chén Jìnggū 陳靖姑 (aka Madame Línshuǐ 臨水夫人) in Gǔtián County, as well as other prominent cults such as the Five Blessed Grand Emperors 五福大帝, in which Spirit-mediums played a major role. Though some references to Wū in this gazetteer can be tentatively identified as Ritual Masters or Spirit-mediums, many others are among the more ambiguous passages examined in this chapter.

Like most local gazetteers, references to Wū and other forms of local religion are primarily found in the section on Popular Customs 風俗, and the first reference to Wū in this section of the Qiánlóng *Fúzhōu Prefecture Gazetteer* describes a coming-of-age ceremony in Fúzhōu led by Wū, a ceremony known in Táinán (and Quánzhōu, among other places) as "Becoming Sixteen-years-of-age" 做十六歲[40]:

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[39] See *Jiànyáng* 125-6, where the authors find that all such exorcistic rites "are gradually disappearing." (126). Most details describing this rite of "Sending-off the Straw Boat are given on 140-141. The patient-oriented nature of this rite recalls the similar rituals in DFHY 221-222.

[40] In many locations on this date young people, perhaps especially girls, would perform acts of worship to "request skill" 乞巧. In Táinán and Ānpíng, where the "Becoming Sixteen" rite is still practiced on 7/7 at a small

> Among the common people, when boys and girls reach sixteen years of age they invite Wū to perform an offering ceremony 醮, announce their entry into adulthood to the deities, and call this "emerging from childhood." Such practice departs far indeed from proper ritual.
> 民間則男女年十六延巫設醮，告成人於神，謂之做出幼，是失禮愈遠也.[41]

By indicating that the Wū in question "performed an offering ceremony" 延巫設醮,[42] it seems highly unlikely the expert in question was a Spirit-medium, but was almost surely a Ritual Master. This probability is strengthened by the widespread situation found in Fújiàn where "hybrid" lineages of Lűshān priests have merged their Tantric-Popular traditions with symbols and conventions of Zhèngyī Daoism, and are the primary performers of Jiào ceremonies.

Furthermore, most gazetteers and other historical sources pointedly do not call Daoist priests Wū, but instead refer to them as "Dàoshì" 道士, or by the general term "Dào" 道. When appearing in conjunction with Buddhist monks, or when either could perform the same service, as was often the case with funerals and the Rite of Universal Salvation 普度, texts speak of "Buddhists

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number of temples. several, such as the Chōngfú Gōng 崇福宮 and Kāilóng Gōng 開隆宮 typically do not have ritual expert per officiating per se, but the figures on the paper Seven Stars Stupa 七星塔 (under which the youth crawl and thence pass into symbolic adulthood) are animated by kāiguāng 開光 and infused with spirit, by either a Ritual Master or a Daoist priest. At a few temples Daoist priests administers a rite, such as at the Táinán Fūrén Mā Temple 夫人媽廟 where they perform an Invitation of the Spirits 啟白, animate the paper images, and read a memorial, all while the participants and temple representatives hold incense behind the priests (in the manner of most Daoist ritual) before the youth crawl under the stupa and a long table. Modern practice of this rite has become concentrated into a number of temples, but in the past was performed at people's homes, with or without a ritual expert. I have heard it said that to save expense and time, custom shifted to favor a more convenient form of the rite facilitated by a few specific temples, in Táinán most famously the Kāi Lóng Temple 開隆宮 to the Goddess of the Seven Stars 七星娘娘, which in the Japanese and early Republic (in Táiwān) past had a Minor Rite Troupe of their own, but which later disbanded.

[41] 乾隆 19(1754) 福州府志 j.24:3b.

[42] It is hard to know in what sense the term Jiào 醮 is being used here, as gazetteers also often refer to rites associated with weddings as Jiào as well. But as the Lűshān altars of Jiànyáng and Longyan perform rituals called Jiào, and possess liturgical texts with the term in their titles, we should not take it to necessarily indicate a rite performed by (unambiguously) Zhèngyī Daoist priests.

and Daoists": Sēng/Dào 僧道, or "Fó/Dào"佛道.[43] As will be shown in the following discussion, numerous texts mention Wū, sometimes in multiple contexts, and then also speak of Daoist priests and Buddhist monks. These sources distinguish between Wū and Daoist priests, and in some cases this distinction is directly addressed. Hence I believe in virtually all cases where pre-modern sources use the term Wū to designate a ritual expert who performs ritual as priest, with one possible exception notwithstanding,[44] such texts are not making reference to priests of the classical Daoist tradition, nor to Spirit-mediums, but rather to Ritual Masters of the Tantric-Popular variety who, like the Spirit-mediums they may well perform with, serve as the primary ritual experts of the Common Religion.

I advance this analysis of the Wū in primary texts having restricted my use of sources to Fújiàn and Táiwān (including Jīnmén and Pénghú), where fieldwork studies and liturgical materials allow positive identification of Ritual Masters operating in society. I have been prompted to this interpretation not simply by inference drawn from field evidence, but in many cases by the

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[43] For example, in a passage from the *Five Assorted Offerings* 五雜俎 describing funerary custom, and paraphrased in the Qiánlóng Fúzhōu gazetteer (and discussed below), the text first mentions how "In Fújiàn it is customary when someone has just breathed their last, and there are daughters who have married, then the family of the daughter's husband invites a Wū to set up a lantern wheel and turn it 閩俗於初屬纊之時，有女適人者，則婿家延巫，置燈輪轉之[...](*Wǔ Zázǔ* 14). After describing this practice the next sentence continues with funerary custom noting that "After the passing of the deceased every seven days they prepare a sacrifice, and call it "passing the sevens," and this continues to forty-nine days and then stops. Then some will invite Buddhist monks or Daoist priests to perform a rite of merit, but gentry families who observe [proper] ritual methods do not follow [this practice]. 死每七日則備一祭，謂之過七，至四十九日而止。或有延僧道作道場功德者，□紳禮法之家不爾也。Hence, in the *Five Assorted Offerings* we can see how a late Míng author distinguished between Wū and Daoist priests, even when the former were performing as priests conducting ceremony, and not being possessed by a spirit. I believe we can be reasonably certain that when late imperial sources use the term Wū to describe a ritual expert functioning as a priest, i.e. conducting ritual but not subject to spirit-possession, such use of the term Wū is, in the vast majority of cases, meant to indicate a Ritual Master and not a Daoist priest, as the authors of these late imperial sources could both tell the difference, and felt the distinction to be important enough to notate. Thus historical texts consistently use terms like dào-shì 道士 and dào 道 to label priests of the classical Daoist tradition.

[44] See discussion of the 1717 *Zhūluó County Gazetteer* 諸羅縣志 below.

overt and explicit nature of the primary sources themselves. And while texts sometimes speak of Wū in ambiguous ways which could indicate either Spirit-mediums or Ritual Masters, or both, in many cases it is abundantly clear that the Wū in question are Ritual Masters. Such usage is by no means rare, nor caused by simple confusion with Spirit-mediums. Rather, as a historic textual practice and an indigenous category, the term Wū is, from the Sòng onward, used to primarily indicate both Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters, ritual experts of the Common Religion who share extensive historical and performative connections.

The Popular Customs 風俗 section of the Qiánlóng *Fúzhōu Prefecture Gazetteer* goes on to mention how

> When pestilential miasmas are spreading about, villagers vie with one another to contribute money for to invite Wū to offer prayers. They call this averting disaster.
> 疫氣流傳則社民爭出金錢延巫祈禱謂之禳災[45]

As Spirit-mediums routinely offer prayers and intercede with Heaven on behalf of the temple community, this passage is somewhat ambiguous, and could broadly refer to Spirit-mediums, Ritual Masters –or both. That villagers "vied with one another" to donate the necessary funds, however, suggests the ritual in question was sufficiently expensive to require collective sponsorship. Though clearly Spirit-mediums would have expected fees, and an important rite would require substantial offerings and other ephemera, normally rites performed by Daoists and Ritual Master troupes would be more likely to demand expenses necessitating collective community sponsorship. Furthermore, rites for the expulsion of plague figure prominently in the

[45] 乾隆 19(1754) 福州府志 j.24:5a.

repertoire of Ritual Officers, of both Daoist and Tantric-Popular domains.[46] Given the ambiguity of the passage, perhaps the expensive, plague-expelling Wū in question here were Spirit-mediums, but the importance of such plague-expelling ritual in their repertoire suggests they may well have been Ritual Masters. If Ritual Masters did conduct such a rite, most likely Spirit-mediums would also have performed in such an important community ritual. Whatever the case, the same section of the *Qiánlóng Fúzhōu Prefectural Gazetteer* describes a funerary rite conducted by Wū that almost certainly were Ritual Masters:

> The common people in Fújiàn, when someone has breathed their last (and their nostrils are stuffed with cotton), they invite a Wū to set up a lantern-wheel and turn it. Men and women circumambulate [the lantern-wheel] wailing and crying. They call this the Medicine Master Tree...Inviting Wū to set up lanterns and all such vile customs, the common folk still continue these practices. The gentry class most certainly does not [share] this custom.[47]
> 閩俗于初屬纊之時延巫置燈輪轉之。男女環繞號哭。謂之藥師樹。[...]延巫置燈諸惡習編氓尚沿之。士大夫絕無是也。

This passage, as the Fúzhōu gazetteer informs us, is taken from the late Míng record of customs *Five Assorted Offerings* 五雜俎 (*Wǔ Zázǔ*) by northeast Fújiàn native Xiè Zhàozhè 謝肇淛 (1567-1624). And though this particular anecdote claims the educated elite shunned ritual practices like this "unorthodox" funerary rite, elsewhere in the *Five Assorted Offerings*, Xiè observes that

> The Wū-xí of today are flourishing in Jiāngnán, not just in Jiāngnán but in Fújiàn and Guǎngdōng they are especially numerous. In Fújiàn the wives and daughters of elite families also respectfully believe and reverently worship [the cults served by these Wū-xi] no differently than if they were [orthodox] spirits of Heaven. If there is some small outbreak of disease then immediately there are prayers and ritual processions 賽, offering prayers and beseeching [the gods] without a day's pause until there is no trace of the [epidemic] demons. With spirit-money piled on paths

[46] See below, and the above citations to *Jiànyáng;* Katz (1995, 1997) and my discussion elsewhere of the Royal Jiào.
[47] 福州府志 j.24:4b.

> and sacrificial offerings of wine and meat lining the road, all manner of bells and drums unceasing in people's homes, while the dead victims multiply with each passing day. What a pity superiors have not prohibited all this, how lamentable![48]
> 今之巫覡，江南為盛，而江南又閩，廣為甚。閩中富貴之家，婦人女子，其敬信崇奉，無異天神；少有疾病即禱賽祈求無虛日，亦無遺鬼。楮陌牲醪相望於道，鐘鼓鐃鐸不絕於庭，而橫死者日眾。惜上之人無有禁之者，哀哉！

Though the subject of this passage shifts from the "wives and daughters of elite families" to practices of the entire society, the implication is unmistakable: the women of gentry elites were patronizing religious experts labeled as Wū-xí, and reportedly revering their cults as if "they were no different than the spirits of Heaven," i.e. orthodox deities safe from literati anxieties. De Groot also describes how in late Qīng Xiamen, women of well-to-do families would employ the female spirit mediums known as Āng-Yí 厓姨 ("Puppet Aunties"), who primarily specialize in channeling the spirits of deceased family members.[49] Hence in this case I am inclined to believe the Wū-xí in this passage were more likely Spirit-mediums, and female mediums at that, if they were associating with elite women. Nevertheless, it is well known that elites supported all manner of local cults, and were, in the late imperial period and earlier, deeply involved in spirit-writing cults, all subjects raised by several sources cited below. [50]

The Qiánlóng *Fúzhōu Prefectural Gazetteer* continues with yet another passage again depicting Wū as priests officiating rites for the expulsion of plague spirits by sending them off on

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[48] *Wū Zázǔ*, j. 6.

[49] See De Groot V: 1333-5 for a description of such a séance. Several works by Féng Mènglóng 馮夢龍, the prolific author and editor of late Míng vernacular fiction, also portray elite families hiring Spirit-mediums and in one case, being possessed by the spirit of the Five Manifestations 五顯. See *Jǐngshì Tōngyán* 警世通言 Chapter 27, 假神仙大鬧華光廟. An English translation is given in Shuhui Yang trans., *Stories to Caution the World: A Ming Dynasty Collection, Volume 2* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 463-473.

[50] See Guo (2005) and Xǔ Dìshān 許地山 (1994).

a sacrificial boat, one of the most widespread and important ritual practices of southeast China and modern Táiwān.[51] In Fúzhōu, the gazetteer tells us,

> When epidemic disease breaks out, the common people gather together to invite a perverse spirit and worship it in a courtyard, anxiously performing ceremonies morning and night, with unceasing ritual processions. If by good fortune the disease gets better, then they have a Wū perform a ritual with a papier-mâché boat at the water's edge. When the boat is sent off everyone closes their doors and gives it a wide berth.[52]
> 俗當瘟疫之疾一起即請邪神奉事于庭，惴惴然朝夕禮拜許賽不已。幸而病癒又令巫作法事以紙糊船送之水際。船出人皆閉戶避之。

Here the Wū are described as presiding over the ritual for sending off a plague-boat, a priestly rather than mediumistic function, and though Spirit-mediums frequently perform in conjunction with such rites, usually the rite itself is conducted by a Daoist priest or Ritual Master, with all three often involved in the Táinán region. In Pénghú in particular it is not uncommon for a temple's Minor Rite troupe and Spirit-mediums to perform such rites without Daoist priests, while in southern Táiwān, Língbǎo Daoist rites for sending off the plague boat exhibit major influences from the more Tantric-Popular forms of Ritual Method, above and beyond the strong Daoist-brand Ritual Method symbolism of the liturgy.[53] The fact that Taiwanese (i.e. Mínnán) traditions

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[51] On the history and practice of sending off plague spirits by boat see Katz (1995, 康豹 1997)

[52] Qiánlóng Fúzhōu Fu Zhi, 24:4b. Interestingly, this description resembles the practice still followed in southern Táiwān, though now performed in fixed periods of three or twelve years, rather than in response to episodic epidemics. In the modern practice, one of twelve or thirty-six Kings of Epidemic 瘟王 are summoned and worshipped for the duration of the Royal Offering 王醮; in such cases, the main hall of the major temple sponsoring the rite is converted into a Royal Prefecture 王府 where the particular King of Epidemic is worshipped with a series of daily offerings. See Ōfuchi 282-291 for the Táinán liturgy.

[53] In the Língbǎo Daoist Royal Jiào 王醮, the penultimate episodes of the Pacification of the Epidemic 和瘟 and the Striking the Boat Offering 打船醮 are in the latter case a fully Red-Headed, Lűshān-type ritual, while the former counts among the most Ritual Method-oriented rites in the modern Língbǎo repertoire, and is particularly noteworthy for its unique invocation of a Daoist version of the Five Encampments 五營, the only place such an invocation or symbolism appears in a non-Red-Headed rite of the Língbǎo priests. In Píngdōng (東港 Dōnggǎng), the Pacification of the Epidemic rite is performed as a fully Red-Headed ritual, featuring what

oblige the Língbǎo priests to adopt Red-Headed symbols and methods in these rites suggests that the broader Fújiànese custom of plague-expelling ritual has a historically significant connection with the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method. [54]

In Fúzhōu, expulsion of epidemic formed the ritual specialty and mythic origin of the city's most famous cult, the Five Blessed Grand Emperors 五福大帝. Thanks to its prominence, geographic extent, and history of repeated but futile prohibitions, the cult of the Five Emperors has left a sufficiently large impression in the religious landscape and historical sources to make it among the better known cults of the late imperial period.[55] Based in a network of temples in Fúzhōu, the cult was so influential and led to such noteworthy official prohibitions that the Qiánlóng *Fúzhōu Prefecture Gazetteer* features an unusually large amount of information related to the cult and its attempted suppression in the early Qīng. The gazetteer frames the discussion in the context of Wū as healers, and the perceived opposition between Wū and the classical medical tradition (yì , yào 醫, 藥 used both together and separately). This rhetorical juxtaposition and cultural antagonism between the Wū and classical medicine appears with such frequency in late

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is essentially a Gathering of the Outer Killer-spirits 收外煞 performance, and quite unlike the Táinán area Pacification of Epidemics, in which documents are burned and sealed in a vessel to be placed on the Royal Boat. Thus in both cases, the climax of the exorcistic Royal Jiào features the most intensive concentration of Ritual Method, and indeed Tantric-Popular Ritual Method content in the two different Língbǎo traditions of southern Táiwān. I examine these issues in more detail in my discussion of the Jiào and Royal Jiào.

[54] Paul Katz (Kāng Bào 康豹, 《臺灣的王爺信仰》, 9-10) suspects the Taiwanese Pacification of the Epidemic 和瘟 rites may have been influenced by Ritual Masters of the Shénxiāo 神霄 tradition, and points to Shénxiāo liturgies for the expulsion of plague, including by boat, in the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* (DFHY 220,221) that share some structural and terminological elements with the Píngdōng Royal Offering 王醮.

[55] See Michael Szony, "The Illusion of Standardizing the Gods: The Cult of the Five Emperors in Late Imperial China," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Feb., 1997): 113-135; Justice Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1865), 157-162, 276-287; Katz (康豹), 《臺灣的王爺信仰》, 16-24. Though Szony cites some of these same passages from the Qiánlóng *Fúzhōu Prefectural Gazetteer*, in each case he omits the parts that discuss the Wū, and unlike Doolittle, nowhere does Szony raise the issue of ritual experts and Spirit-mediums in his discussion of the cult.

imperial sources that it forms a major trope in the depiction of Wū, and an important area of contestation between popular and elite forms of culture. As the tensions of this Wū-medicine antagonism led to extensively-documented developments in the Qīng, I will shortly examine those developments in detail. As an instructive prelude to this sub-plot, the Qiánlóng *Fúzhōu Prefecture Gazetteer* frames the term Wū in a particular context of ritual healing and social custom:

> The common people of Mín [Fújiàn], when there are epidemic diseases they only trust in Wū, and say that if you see a doctor you are sure to die. Even with their closest relatives they are so afraid of being contaminated that they do not take care of each other, and the dead are not given a funeral [or, a proper burial]. They rely on spirits the common people called the Grand Emperors. They set up their images on an altar, and all together there are five; their ferocious countenance is quite fearsome. Their temple is radiant and magnificent; those who pass by in front hold their breath and don't dare look too closely. By tradition, the fifth day of the fifth month is the gods' birthday, and for more than a month before and after there are theatrical performances to repay vows to the god, and in each temple there is not an idle day. Even people who are not sick, they too all rush about crying out to be afraid and threatening that people will be punished for their wrongdoings. If the disease-pneumas keep spreading then the villagers vie with one another to contribute cash and invite a Wū to offer prayers, and call this ritually averting disaster.[56]
> 閩俗病瘟獨信巫，謂謁醫必死。雖至親亦懼傳染不相顧問死亦不發喪。按神俗稱大帝，像設几五，其貌猙獰可畏。殿宇煥儼，過其前者屏息不敢諦視。又傳五月五日為神生日，前後月餘酬愿演劇，各廟無虛日，既無疾之人亦皆奔走呼籲惟恐怨恫嚇罪譴，或疫氣流染則社民爭出金錢延巫祈禱，謂之攘[禳]災。

This short passage conveys the sense of panic and dread evoked by epidemic, in which people were so terrified by the contagion that they neglected sick parents, and when family members died, held no funeral at all, perhaps the only thing worse in the eyes of ultra-orthodox elites than a funeral

[56] 乾隆 福州府志 24:4b-5a. Szony ("The Illusion of Standardizing the Gods," 119-120) also cites the first part of this passage, but his excerpt stops before mentioning the Wū, and his paper never mentions ritual experts. Also, Szony's translation misses the original text's emphasis on moral retribution, the understanding expressed by locals that the plague was punishment for people's misdeeds.

performed by Buddhists, Daoists, or Wū. Importantly, this passage makes clear that the cult was flourishing even in times of no disease, with multiple temples hosting more than two months of incessant theater, and though ritual processions are not mentioned here, they may go without saying.

The two appearances of Wū in this passage exemplify the ambiguous flexibility of the term, but also specify its classic parameters. The Wū as healer and antithesis to the medical tradition in essence refers to both Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters. But the last line reveals that these Wū were sufficiently expensive to require collective sponsorship, and who performed prayers for averting disaster 禳災. As with the previous example, such arrangements could imply sponsorship of a Ritual Master troupe, in which case they were likely accompanied by Spirit-mediums, who would, in my experience, definitely participate in whatever important ceremonies their temple communities undertook. Given the ambiguity of the passage, perhaps these were high-priced Spirit-mediums who demanded extensive offerings to help "avert disaster." But as Fúzhōu is near to Chén Jìnggū's ancestral temple in northern Fújiàn, with its flourishing lineages of Ritual Masters distributed throughout the region, such a large ritual event would conceivably attract Ritual Masters in some capacity. These rather ambiguous examples, however, are far less conclusive than many other sources examined in this chapter, so it cannot be ruled out that the Wū in question here were primarily Spirit-mediums, which is to say, the Five Emperors incarnate.[57]

The cult of the Five Emperors was sufficiently notorious to draw official suppression on several occasions, and the same Qiánlóng *Fúzhōu Prefecture Gazetteer* continues with a section

[57] Whether Ritual Masters of some kind may have helped facilitate and translate the possession-performances of mediums in Fúzhōu is a question that may be difficult to answer given the disruption of religious culture in the 20th C.

describing how, in Kāngxī 39 (1680) the Prefectural Magistrate Chí Weíchéng had the main temple of the Five Emperors torn down, and donated the building materials to the local academy. But not long after Prefect Chí passed away, the temple was swiftly restored to its former grandeur, with more than ten additional shrines built as well. Despite this official attempt at eradicating the Five Emperors, in a major administrative center no less, the authority of the yámen was soon overruled by that of the temple, and the cult was soon flourishing even more than before.[58] The author of this passage goes on to speculate that the failure of official prohibition and subsequent revival of the temple was

> probably due to Wū-xí 巫覡 taking [the destruction of the temple] as a pretext to extort cash from the ignorant common folk with heterodox talk of avoiding disaster and culpability [if the temple was rebuilt]. Thus as soon as the temple was destroyed it was again rebuilt. This is something a legal decree cannot put a stop to. Thus in Fújiàn, where there are many illicit cults, this one is especially serious.
> 蓋巫覡藉以掠金錢愚氓異以免殃咎。故旋毀旋復；法令所不能禁也。閩中故多淫祀此特其尤甚者耳。

This particular episode garnered still further documentation, with the same Qiánlóng *Fúzhōu Prefectural Gazetteer* adding a small-character commentary with the "Song of Our Dynasty's Assiduous Inspector and Prefect of Fúzhōu Destroying Illicit Cults," in which the activities of Wū are again cited as instrumental in the cult's popularity:

> The ignorant common folk are utterly impoverished; they have arts for praying for blessings, and illicit shrines indeed figure as one [such art]. Customs in the Eight Regions of Mín [i.e. Fújiàn] place particular faith in Wū, and [these Wū] hide like rats among the temples of the city. The Wū said that this year the gods would bring down disaster and plague upon the city with such might that no one could stop it. People everywhere sacrificed cattle and dismembered goats and pigs, creating a mass sensation, rushing about like the wind. With incessant ritual processions of

[58] 乃遲卒未踰時而廟貌巍然，且增至十有餘處，視昔尤盛。24:5a

> welcoming the gods, sending off the gods, and interpreting the gods' wrath, through these gatherings [the Wū] plundered cash by the hundred-thousands. Households strung up banners and flags on both sides of the street, and when the captain of the imperial guard rode through, the crowd refused to clear the road and yield, and in an instant the order came down to burn this vessel of devilry. At first the local residents just stared at the sky expecting demonic mischief, and fled to pray for safety. Those who were not fools scoffed; a thousand-year-old vile custom is stubborn indeed.
>
> 愚氓致貧，蓋有術祈福淫祠亦其一。八閩風俗尤信巫，亂竄城狐就私暱，巫言今年神降殃癘疫將作勢莫當家家殺牛磔羊豕舉國奔走如風。經[?]迎神送神解神怒會掠金錢十萬。戶旗旄夾道，鹵簿馳官長行來不避路，忽聞下令燔妖廬。居民初睢盱青天白日鬼怪遁向來祈奉寧。非愚嗟嗟;千年陋習牢[59]

Here Spirit-mediums are blamed for inciting a panic by using their authority as the voice of the gods to prophecy that the spirits were to send down an epidemic, and the ensuing panic eventually grew into a vehicle for resistance to official privilege. Indeed, episodes where people parading gods refused to yield the road to officials form a noticeable theme in late imperial friction between local gods and local officials.[60] And when the prefect responded to this affront by destroying the main

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[59] 福州府志，24:5a.

[60] Szony ("The Illusion of Standardizing the Gods,"128-9) mentions that Justice Doolittle (*Social Life of the Chinese*, 1:277-8) reports another such incident in the eighteenth century when the sedan(s) of the Five Emperors refused to yield to the magistrate. In Táiwān such an episode forms a popular tradition regarding the major pentad-spirit cult of Wūfǔ Qiānsuì 五府千歲, The Five Royal Lords 王爺 of Nánkūnshēn 南鯤身, about forty kilometers north of Táinán city. During the Qīng, one or more of the Five Lords would often be carried out on patrol in his sedan, as far as Táinán in the south and Jiāyì 嘉義 to the northeast, where the cult was building a following of branch temples. On one occasion, in Jiājìng 25 "just as the temple was being (re)built, in accordance with custom the Five Kings went on patrol to Jiāyì and when the procession happened to meet the Jiāyì County Magistrate on the road, each refused to yield to the other. Then suddenly they saw a farmer, and the spirit attached itself to his body. He used a hoe and wrote in big characters in the dirt: 'On behalf of the heavenly administration, regulating yīn and yáng, yearning for the good, and that the evil change their ways, one road to cultivate the real can avert the age-ending disaster.' The magistrate was invited to write a verse in reply, but he just bit his tongue. Then the farmer again took up the hoe and wrote, 'patrolling and hunting in the world to separate the black and white, this is not because people burn spirit money and offer entertainments [to me, the god], nor can a hundred kinds of flattery and offerings avert disaster." The magistrate then gave way, and the procession of the gods continued to Jiāyì. Liú Zhìwàn, 「臺灣之瘟疫神廟」, 在於《臺灣民間信仰論集》, 274:「嘉慶 25 年正在建廟時，五王依例北巡至嘉義，適與縣令邂逅途中，各不讓路，忽見一農夫，神附其身，用鋤頭大書地上，曰：「代天府理陰陽，但願善惡改，一道修真消末劫。」請縣令為

temple, the preceding passage surmises that again it was Spirit-mediums who threatened disaster as punishment for this blasphemy, and thereby solicited ample donations to rebuild on an even grander scale. Hence well into the Qīng dynasty, Spirit-mediums were able to mobilize human and financial resources on a sufficiently large scale to overwhelm government power in a provincial capital.

Another informative mid-Qīng source is the 1762 *Hǎichéng County Gazetteer* 海澄縣志, which offers a number of important observations on Wū and religious practices in this highly commercialized coastal region between Xiàmén and Zhāngzhōu. Of primary interest here is a brief discourse on the Wū, complete with a vivid description of Spirit-mediums:

> Wū-xí have existed since antiquity. The *Guóyǔ* says "female are called 'Wū' and male called 'Xí'; they are employed to govern the place where the divinities sit [or, the place where spirit-tablets are kept]." Among the common people they pray and [perform as] "jumping spirits," mostly employing a kind of male Xí who in truth is a young ruffian. [Half-]naked, barefoot, and with streaming hair, they brandish broadswords and leap about, splitting open their heads and faces, with streaming blood running down over their bodies. The ignorant folk and village rustics are stricken with terror, and with a clamor of drums they worship their divine brute. This kind of vile custom harms culture and destroys customs, and should be strenuously prohibited. The *Family Instructions* of Yán Zhītuī says, "My family rejects all talk of Wū-xú, talismans, and petitions, as you can see, and are not deluded by fiendish nonsense." [Haǐ]chéng also has households and villages which for many generations have not been deluded by Wū-xí, Buddhists, jumping spirits, nor hold [Daoist] Jiào. They should be admired and praised.
> 巫覡自古有之。國語云在女曰巫在男曰覡，使制神位處也。俗下祈報跳神，多用一種男覡實惡少也；裸跣散髮持刀跳躍毀裂頭面，流血被體。村俗愚民震慴，鼓譟服其神勇。此等惡之習傷風敗俗，宜力禁止。顏之推家順曰吾家巫覡符章，絕於言議，汝曹所見，勿為妖妄所惑

對，縣令咋舌，祇得讓路，農夫又執鋤頭書曰：「巡狩間分黑白，非因紙戲錢燒，百般貢媚免災殃。」 Note the millenarian sentiment expressed.

。澄亦有守禮家鄉累世不惑巫覡浮屠及跳神修醮等事。宜相觀而善可也。

As numerous liturgical texts of the Táinán Chen-family Daoists still indicate their origin in Hǎichéng County, like southern China generally, communities which did not have Spirit-mediums or hold Daoist Jiào must have formed a distinct minority, if not outright rarity.

The oppositions between prevailing customs and the minority Confucian position are again voiced in the late-Qīng *Zhāngpíng County Gazetteer*, which observes that

> [The people] esteem ghosts, and when diseases spread they always pray with Wū. Funeral sacrifices mostly employ Buddhist services, while capping ceremonies and weddings follow vulgar custom, with few practicing the ancient ceremonies [of the Neo-Confucian program]. There are some among the families of the scholar-gentry who practice [the ancient rites], but [the prevailing customs] cannot yet be ended and changed.
> 尚鬼，疾病每禱以巫，喪祭多修佛事，冠婚從俗，少行古禮，士大夫家間有行之，未能卒變也。[61]

Like most period commentary on these topics, not only are the Wū discussed in conjunction with these other objects of Neo-Confucian ritual reform, the author confesses that even among the gentry, adoption of the artificial "ancient rites" was far from universal, and that the very Buddhist, Daoist, and other customs which the Neo-Confucian program so vehemently opposed were still practiced by both the elite and society at large.

A Qīng gazetteer from Mǎxiàng Subprefecture 馬巷廳[62] in Quánzhōu cites two passages from older gazetteers which again echo these associations among medicine, Wū, and ritual propriety, while offering mixed testimony on elite adherence to the authors' idealized notions of orthodoxy:

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[61] 道光 10 (民國 24 reprint) 漳平縣志 , 卷 1 輿地 1:11b.
[62] 乾隆 42 (1777)，光緒 19(1893) 補刊，馬巷廳志，j.1 風俗 4a.

> As to the sick seeking [cures] from Wū-xí, and mourners employing Buddhists, these definitely exist, but Confucians are mostly not deluded, and when offering funerary sacrifices [they] all use the *Family Rituals* of Zhū [Xī]. [Those who sponsor] ritual processions of the gods and [rites] of the Buddhists do not know to minimize expenses, [with costs] as much as several hundreds [of taels], and if less then still many tens of taels. This should be gradually reformed.[63]
> 至於病求巫覡，居喪用浮屠固有之，但儒者亦多不惑，祭奠俱用朱文公家禮，惟賽神浮屠罔知節省，多至百計，少亦下數十金，所當漸革者也。（隆慶縣志）

While this passage asserts that "Confucians" 儒者 "all" follow Zhū Xī's ritual program, and emphasizes the recurrent theme of "minimizing expenses" as an underlying principle in their reformist ideology, this same gazetteer quotes a different source which laments that "educated and ceremonially proper families" 讀書禮儀之家 in fact still practice rites associated with Wū and Daoists:

> [The 'old' *Tóng-Ān County Gazetteer*] says: "[The people] place their faith in Master-Wū [and their] perverse religion, who clog [the streets] with crowds, claiming they can produce blessings and deliver from adversity, poisonously deluding people's minds, so that there are Retreat and Jiào ceremonies, prayers, sacrifices, and rites to eliminate disasters, with the result that no small amount of funds are squandered. If educated and ceremonially proper families still practice these [rites], then what of the foolish [multitude]?[64]
> 曰信師巫邪教充塞倡為作福度厄之說，蠱惑人心，於是齋醮禱祀祈禳祓除彼此，效尤耗費不少，雖讀書禮儀之家猶苟為之，何況愚者哉。（以上俱舊同安縣志）

The multiple referents of the term Wū, and elite anxieties about Popular cults are again expressed in a passage from a Míng (1543) gazetteer of Shàowǔ Prefecture 邵武府, in northwestern Fújiàn. The section on Popular Customs states that

[63] 馬巷廳志，j.1 風俗 4a.
[64] 馬巷廳志 j.1 6a.

> The common people place faith in ghosts and are fond of cultic sacrifice; in this they are unchanging. They especially esteem the jumping masters [Spirit-mediums],[65] and there is no place within or outside the city walls where one cannot hear the shouted calls and sound of drums and horns. The spirits they worship in their communities, on their birthdays they hang colored banners and set up an Offering 醮[altar], all extremely ornate and skillful. Men and women, young and old all come one after another to worship, and sometimes invite other gods to accompany the Offering ceremony. In this long-running degeneracy, there is some that is indescribable. Though it has been officially forbidden many times, there is no way to eradicate [such customs].[66]
>
> 俗信鬼好祀不移，尤尚跳師，號說鼓角之聲無城內外日夜相聞，其地所祀神誕辰結綵設醮極其華巧，男女老幼羅拜紛紛，或請他神陪醮流弊有不可道者，雖屢禁弗能革也。

This Míng gazetteer again confirms the ubiquity of Spirit-mediums within and outside the walled prefectural city. Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters are such a fixture in urban culture that the "sound of drums and horns" can be heard everywhere, day and night. Indeed the drum and especially the horn are iconic markers of the Ritual Master, prominent in ritual performance, iconography, and liturgical texts.[67] Also, this disapproving source remarks that the festive decorations and ritual altars are "extremely ornate and skillful;" like the magnificent temples to the Five Emperors in Fúzhōu, even here in a hinterland city, unsympathetic literati authors agree the Daoist Common Religion is aesthetically impressive and the focus of considerable artistic skill.[68]

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[65] In Táinán parlance, to perform or serve as a Spirit-medium is still referred to with the verb 'to jump' 跳 (tiào), as in 跳童乩 etc.; likewise performers can 'jump Zhongkui' 跳鍾馗, 'jump Eight Family Generals' 跳八家將. The verb 'jump' here basically means to perform these traditions, which can in fact involve some jumping and hopping. The phrase 'tiào shén' 跳神 is among the most widespread terms indicating Spirit-mediumship in historical sources from other regions.

[66] 嘉靖邵武府志，風俗 p.43.

[67] Interestingly, in the Pénghú tradition and the Táinán-area "Black Head" tradition-group (save the Lián Jíchéng/Héyì Táng transmission-lineage), the horn is not used, and is not part of the normal ritual paraphernalia. This noticeable, shared feature may well point to a common influence emanating from an earlier cluster of traditions in which the horn was, for whatever reasons, not used.

[68] Many gazetteers lament the fortune spent on large festivals, especially Royal Offerings 王醮.

We also learn that gods were brought in to participate in the Offering ceremony, just as gods "observe the Jiao" 鑒醮 in modern practice. And again, the powerlessness of the government to impose top-down reform on local custom is as true in this hinterland administrative center as in the provincial capital.

And yet there are claims of government success from time to time in these sources. For example, the 1521 *Shùnchāng City Gazetteer* 順昌邑志 reports that

> [The people] esteem ghosts and spirits, and reverently place their faith in Wū-xí. When diseases spread they rarely employ doctors and medicine, but exclusively offer sacrifice and pray at illicit shrines. Around the hinterlands, when springtime comes, temple festivals of the gods are especially flourishing. In the tenth year of the Zhèngdé reign (1516), county magistrate Mǎ Xìnglú[69] eliminated illicit shrines in the county, [whereupon] these practices immediately ceased.[70]
> 尚鬼神尊信巫覡；疾病罕延醫藥，專祀祈禱淫祠。遍於四境至春賽神尤盛。正德十五年知縣馬性魯革縣淫祠，此風頓息。

In a similar vein, the Míng *Provincial Gazetteer of the Eight [Regions of] Mín* 八閩通志 (*Bā Mín Tōngzhì*) cites an essay by a Sòng-era city magistrate Chén Chāng 陳昌, who praises a Northern Sòng magistrate for his Confucianizing reforms in Gǔtián County 古田縣:

> The city people highly esteem Wū and ghosts.[71] In the Jìngdé reign period (1004-1007) the city magistrate Lǐ Kān prohibited and eradicated the Wū and [their] ghosts. [At that time] the people began to know of Benevolence and Righteousness, Ceremony and Music, and the transformative effect of education.
> 邑人貴尚巫鬼。景德間李堪令邑禁革巫鬼，民始識仁義禮樂教化。

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[69] Mǎ Xìnglú 馬性魯 is in fact the editor credited with producing this gazetteer.

[70] 明正德 16 (1521) 順昌邑志, 卷 1 風俗 9b.

[71] This pairing of Wū and ghosts (or demonic dead) 巫鬼 is not uncommon in gazetteers and other sources. This construction emphasizes the essential linkages among Spirit-mediums, the spirits they incarnate, and the cultic institutions required to produce the phenomenon. For example the *Book of Hàn* 漢書 relates what would become an enduring stereotype of the middle and lower Yangzi regions of Chu 楚 and Jiangnan 江南: that these southerners "place trust in Wū [mediums] and [their] ghosts, and place great importance on illicit cults. 信巫鬼，重淫祀. (漢書志卷 28 下, 楚地.) Interestingly, the same section describes ancient Wū activity in Huái Yáng 淮陽, Hénán, including some poems invoking images of Wū dancing.

But in fact Gǔtián would continue even into the contemporary, post-revolutionary period as home to the ancestral temple of Línshuǐ Fūrén, the great Matriarch and founding figure of the Lűshān Ritual Master tradition.[72] As a major cultic site with continued importance to Lűshān Ritual Masters in contemporary Fújiàn and beyond, the historical tenacity, geographic extent, and cultural influence of this cult show that it is the tradition of the Wū that has prevailed in history and the regional culture. Even when prosecuted with the force of official edict, the Confucian project had but limited impact on the culture beyond segments of the minority elite.

In the *Five Assorted Offerings*, Xiè Zhaòzhè also comments on the extent of Madame Línshuǐ's cult in his native region to the northeast of Fúzhōu:

> Luóyuán and Chánglè all have Madame Línshuǐ temples, and they say Madame [Línshuǐ] is the younger sister of the Princess of Heaven [Māzǔ]. All the ships on the sea sacrifice to her with utmost reverence, and this indeed is nearing excess. For the most part, the people of my prefecture [Chánglé Jùn 長樂郡] esteem ghosts and are fond of Wū submitting petitions 巫章, Offering ceremonies happening without a day's pause. As to wives, they pray for [male] children and the protection of their babies-in-utero, and when their sons reach maturity, they offer prayers and entertainments of a hundred kinds. The gods to whom they pray are all those of the village ladies and [female] mediums 媒[or, matchmakers?]; they even impose surnames and personal names [on these spirits], how laughable!
> 羅源，長樂皆有臨水夫人廟，云夫人，天妃之妹也。海上諸舶，祠之甚虔，然亦近於淫矣。大凡吾郡人尚鬼而好巫章，醮無虛日。至於婦女，祈嗣保胎，及子長成，祈賽以百數。其所禱諸神亦皆里嫗村媒之屬，而強附以姓名，尤大可笑也。

Here we learn not just the regional extent of Madame Línshuǐ's cult, but that in this corner of northeastern Fújiàn it was connected to that of Māzǔ, with Madame Línshuǐ also worshipped as

[72] See Baptandier, *Lady of Linshui.*

a ship-protecting spirit 護航神, which is of course one of Māzǔ's chief roles. Furthermore, the Wū here are said to be submitting written memorials 章(zhāng), a definitive practice of the Daoist priesthood. But as most of the Lűshān and related traditions of Fújiàn practice a more document-intensive form of ritual than the Minor Rite traditions of the Mínnán littoral, this association between Ritual Masters and memorial documents is by no means unusual.[73] In fact, the Taiwanese Minor Rite invocations speak to this issue, as the invocation for Lord-of-the-Rite Zhāng, in his capacity as Saint of the Eastern Camp mentions in the opening line that Zhāng, at his "ancestral residence in Fú[zhōu] Commandery, [had an] altar [where he] practiced sending up memorials" 世居福郡壇行章.[74]

As the *Five Assorted Offerings*, like most late imperial sources, usually refers to Daoist priests and their tradition with various compounds of Dào 道,[75]and because Spirit-mediums are unlikely to have been offering written memorials, the Wū here are probably Ritual Masters, and the Offering (Jiào) mentioned in the next phrase likely indicates their rites as well. Furthermore, this passage relates that women concerned with issues of childbirth were major patrons of Chén Jìnggū's cult, and it appears these women may have had some social standing, as the text implies a social contrast with the village women and mediums, whose deities these ladies are patronizing.

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[73] Schipper (1974, 1985) in discussing the Táinán Ritual Master tradition identifies the lack of such written documents in "vernacular" ritual as a definitive characteristic of Ritual Master practice, and a major difference with classical Daoism, in which written texts and the "sacrifice of texts" play a central role. However, in the Lűshān traditions studied by Yè Míngshēng and John Lagerwey, memorials play a larger role than is the case with the traditions in Táiwān, where written memorials do in fact appear in certain Minor Rite rituals, more now, perhaps, than in the past. When I have raised this issue with Pénghú Ritual Masters, they assert that their traditions have traditionally used memorials in rites of plague-expulsion and for the consecration of temples in particular. The author read such a memorial as a ritual performer in just such a Pénghú Minor Rite consecration of a new temple in Táinán in 2015.

[74] HST 1:57 張公聖者，CXT 153 法天張聖者 (the latter is corrupt here, but still mentions memorials 章).

[75]道士，僧道，道家，etc. See *Wǔ Zázǔ* j.8 for a number of examples.

Moreover, these women are said to have sponsored "prayers and entertainments of a hundred kinds" when their sons were grown; such sponsorship would suggest that these women came from families with substantial disposable income.

The Qiánlóng 28 (1768) *Quánzhōu Prefecture Gazetteer* records observations about Wū in southern Fújiàn, where of Huì-ān County 惠安縣 it is said that

> The common people are quite inclined to serving ghosts and place faith in fortune and omens. A small number of impoverished villagers are without medicine, and so when they fall ill they pray to spirits; until today this custom still persists as before. The gentry clans have been able to drive out the Buddhists, and in the city there are only a few [Buddhist] establishments left. But the rest [of society], when they hold funerals they usually employ Buddhists and Daoists 佛道, with the sound of drums and gongs together with crying and tears, vying to burn paper [ghost] money by the tens of thousands. When people of village communities are ill, they take up the spirit-writing stylus 扶鸞[76], carry gods [in a sedan], or invite Wū-xí to spray [flaming] oil and walk on burning coals. This is the common people's most deluded custom.[77]
> 俗頗務鬼，信機祥。小數窮鄉無醫藥，病則禱於神；及今此風猶然。縉紳之族能屏斥浮屠者邑數家耳。其餘喪事率致僧道，鼓鐃之聲與哭泣競焚楮錢以數十萬計。鄉邦之民病則扶鸞擡神或延巫覡噴油履火。此民俗之最惑者也。

This 18th C. observer emphasizes the universal association of Wū, Popular spirits and healing, with such healing couched as the antithesis to medicine 醫藥. This opposition pitting classical medicine against the spirits and Wū of the Common Religion is again mentioned in the same breath with its parallel in the realm of funerary ritual, where rites advocated by the Neo-Confucian program have failed to displace the Buddhist and Daoist dominance over death ritual, which this author

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[76] The terms "holding the phoenix" 扶鸞 (fú luán) and "the flying phoenix" 飛鸞 (fēi luán) typically refer to a forked, wishbone-shaped stick held by two people by which (in theory) they allow a spirit to write characters in sand or incense powder. But sometimes this term fú luán 扶鸞 refers to a much more common instrument of spirit-writing, the miniature chair called the "little hand sedan" 手轎仔. The forked stick is, in most cases, used by sectarian groups, whereas the little hand sedan is ubiquitous throughout the altars of the Common Religion. See Jordan and Overmyer (1986) for a discussion of sectarian spirit-writing in Táiwān.

[77] 乾隆 28 泉州府志, 20:15b.

concedes to be the prevailing custom outside the gentry. However, other sources examined in this chapter reveal a mixed record among upper-class families as well.

We also see how this source distinguishes between Daoist priests 道 and Wū-xí 巫覡, with the latter described as "spraying [flaming] oil," which may refer to two different practices, both classic techniques of Ritual Masters.[78] Hence where this mid-Qīng Quánzhōu gazetteer describes Wū-xí being hired to perform this rite, evidence from fieldwork suggests these were likely Ritual Masters, but Spirit-mediums could have performed such feats as well. Furthermore, "walking on burning coals" is also a rite normally officiated by Ritual Masters, though usually with Spirit-mediums participating.

Interestingly, the *Five Assorted Offerings* also reports that performers labeled Wū were hired to perform the Rite of Universal Salvation on the Middle Prime festival held on the fifteenth day of seventh lunar month 中元普度:

> The people of Mín place the greatest importance on the Middle Prime Festival, and every household sets up bundles of ghost-money and clothes for the underworld, and [after] arranging these before their ancestor's spirit-tablets they

[78] In one, the Ritual Master sips boiling oil from a pot and then spits it out to produce a burst of flame, usually in conjunction with forming mudras.[78] In the second, more common variation, a pot of oil is brought to boil with a coil of spirit money placed in the center like a large wick (talismans are, in most cases, first affixed to the interior of the pot before the oil is poured in.) Then, once the oil is hot enough, the Ritual Master or Daoist priest acting as a Red-Headed Ritual Master spits rice-liquor onto the oil, producing a large and dramatic fireball that can purify spaces, things, and people. Though uncommon in modern Táiwān, Spirit-mediums may well have practiced sipping oil from pots, much like they have been reported to snatch objects from boiling oil. But in southern Táiwān, the use of a flaming pot of oil to purify spaces and people is a routine practice so closely identified with the Ritual Master tradition that it is among the most emblematic Red-Headed rites performed by Língbǎo Daoist priests, in which they use a classic Red-Headed invocation and melody. Schipper (1985a:35) claims that Ōfuchi does not include the text of this invocation, or that of the Fire Bureau Rite 打火部, and thus concludes that "Ofuchi's informants are *tao-shih* of the classical tradition who clearly do not value very highly the vernacular rituals they perform." However, on both counts Schipper was mistaken, as the invocation for the Fire Bureau is given on Ōfuchi 240, while the invocation for the Rite of Burning Oil to Drive away Filth is given on 706-7. Neither display any linguistically vernacular characteristics. Hence Schipper's conclusion regarding the Daoist priests' attitude toward these rites is likewise unfounded in this case.

> offer sacrifice and then burn them... On the [main?] night of this month, households all maintain pure conduct 齋. [They prepare] wontons and ghost money, and then invite a Wū to the market, where he pronounces invocations and then throws these things [to the crowd], and thereby offers these to the ghosts and spirits who have no sacrificial cult. This is called "Offering Food." Poor families are unable to participate, and there are those who delay until the eighth or ninth month. This is getting close to [ritual] excess, as indeed the ancients held a benevolent attitude toward ghosts and spirits, but their expenditures [on such spirits] were not great.[79]
> 閩人最重中元節，家家設楮陌冥衣，具列先人號位，祭而燎之。[...]是月之夜，家家具齋，餛飩，楮錢，延巫於市上，祝而散之，以施無祀鬼神，謂之「施食」。貧家不能辦，有延至八九月者。此近於淫，然亦古人仁鬼神之意，且其費亦不多也。

In its basic outline and certain details, this description of a Rite of Universal Salvation (Pǔdù 普度) in the late Míng holds true for contemporary practice in Táiwān, though various buns, cakes and fruit, together with real coins are now tossed by the priest –usually a Língbǎo Daoist – to the frenzied crowd. In contemporary Táiwān there are lay Buddhist and Buddhistic ritual experts including Scripture Recitation troupes 誦經團 who also perform the Universal Salvation, but in their Buddhistic garb I doubt traditional sources would label them Wū, with whom they bear no resemblance whatsoever.[80] As the Lűshān traditions documented by Yè Míngshēng and John Lagerwey perform an entire range of mortuary ritual, their association with the all-important Middle Prime Rite of Universal Salvation would not be out of the ordinary. With the paucity of detail in the passage cited above, it is impossible to link the Wū here with any particular tradition,

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[79] *Wǔ Zázǔ* j.2.

[80] In central and northern Táiwān, as well as parts of Fújiàn there is another syncretic tradition called the Shik Gaǒ 釋教 that specializes in funerary rites, and combines Buddhist symbols and deities with Daoist-style altar-scrolls musical accompaniment. Priests of the Shik gaǒ dress in Buddhist-like robes but are not renunciates 出家人. As priests of the dead, the Shik Gaǒ also specialize in the Pǔdù, or the Yoga [rite of opening the] Burning Mouths 瑜伽燄口.There is, evidently, no work on the Shik Gaǒ in English. On the tradition in Táiwān see Yáng Shìxián 楊士賢 (2010). In Taiwanese society, when referring to this syncretic tradition, only the Mínnán pronunciation is used, and the Mandarin pronunciation would in most contexts likely be misunderstood.

but if the ritual specialists in question were Buddhist monks (or resembled Buddhist monks), or Daoist priests, then the *Five Assorted Offerings* would probably have used the phrase "Buddhist-or-Daoist" 僧道 . Hence the Wū here are again most likely Ritual Masters of one kind or another, and not Spirit-mediums who in my knowledge never perform or become possessed in connection with the Middle Prime Festival.[81]

The *Five Assorted Offerings* also demonstrates the bidirectional signification of the term Wū to unambiguously refer to Spirit-mediums, while simultaneously referring to rites that might have been performed by Ritual Masters, or the two together:

> As for sacrificial rites, families of office-holding clans have ancestral temples, and in the four seasons they present offerings, while at other times they perform sacrifices and prayers to ritually avert disaster which are utterly respectful. But the common people have the greatest esteem for Wū-xí. In Mín there are female Wū who have the practice of seeing ghosts. They say to people whatever satisfies people's particular needs, and are a little bit of a fraud. There are also those who swallow swords and spit fire, and who perform rites on behalf people. Between Chǔ [the middle and lower Yángzǐ region] and Shǔ [Sìchuān] fiendish Wū are especially numerous. They heal disease and ritually avert disaster without the slightest efficacy, and they are often capable of using perverse magical arts for making spiritual mischief.[82]
> 祭則世族之家有宗祠，四時薦獻，其外祭祈禳亦致恭敬，而俗則最尚巫覡。閩女巫有習見鬼者。言人人殊足，微詐偽。又有吞刀吐火，為人作法事者。楚，蜀之間，妖巫尤甚。其治病祛災，毫無應驗，而邪術為祟，往往能之。

[81] Indeed there are a number of taboos or prohibitions observed during the seventh lunar month in Táinán, among them a structural antipathy between the descent of normally exorcistic deities while their primary nemesis –unhallowed spirits of the dead– are legally permitted a month of free passage in the human realm. Thus amid other tokens of this truce in the War on the Spectres, such as withdrawing General Black Flag inside the temple, and closing the central temple doors so that the intense gaze of the main god does not radiate outward in its normal manner, a majority of temples and spirit-altars will suspend their normal Spirit-medium séances for the duration of "Ghost Month". The idea seems to be that for one, the descent of the god would pose a threat to the unworshipped ghosts, who, during the seventh lunar month, get a free pass to roam about and enjoy sacrificial offerings. Also, there is, at a certain level, some concern that one of these ghosts could take possession of the medium.

[82] *Wǔ Zázǔ*, j.6.

Here again the *Five Assorted Offerings* contrasts scholar-gentry ancestral sacrifice with the customs of mainstream society, as the ritual forms practiced by the office-holding elite were not representative of society as a whole. Interestingly, Xiè finds the elite-sponsored rituals of disaster-aversion to be dignified, and one wonders if these were in fact Daoist rites, as such prayers for rain and shine formed an important area of Daoist ritual expertise. Whatever the case, this note of respect is contrasted with disdain for the customs of the common people, who primarily "esteem Wū-xí."

In this passage female Spirit-mediums are singled out, perhaps because as previously mentioned these female mediums were commoners that may have had elite female clients. Xiè understood the mediums' modus operandi, true for mediums and psychics worldwide, to "say whatever satisfies people's special needs." But it appears he found these female mediums –probably the Āng Yí 尪姨 ("Puppet-Aunty")-type who channel dead relatives– to be deceptive and manipulative, but in the end, relatively harmless. Then there are others who "swallow swords and spit fire;" grammatically it appears these are different kinds of Spirit-mediums. But next the text states that they "perform rituals on behalf of people" 為人作法事者, where the term I have translated as ritual,法事(fǎ shì) is in modern parlance a common term for rites performed by a Ritual Master or Daoist priest, and involves more than a Spirit-medium writing talismans and making gestures of purification. As such this phrase "perform rituals on behalf of people" 為人作法事者 is ambiguous, but could well refer to rites conducted by a Ritual Master, and in which Spirit-mediums might also have participated.[83] Whatever the case, Xiè observes that in most of

[83] In my experience of contemporary practice, during the course of their regular séances (that most such temples or altars hold every several days or once a week), Spirit-mediums routinely perform gestures to help heal someone or write talismans for people and the like. In the written and spoken language, such commonplace therapeutic

southern China, various kinds of "fiendish Wū" were everywhere, and though ineffective, their trade consisted of healing 治病 and ritually averting disaster 祛災. Hence this passage again shows how the term Wū could in one instance unambiguously indicate Spirit-mediums, while in the same breath imply rites which might have involved Ritual Masters, or both.

Carrying gods, rejecting doctors: gazetteer depictions of spirits prescribing medicines in late imperial Fújiàn and Táiwān

In these late imperial sources, common to most depictions of Wū is an association with healing. As we have seen, local gazetteers and other sources routinely portray the healing given by Wū as the antithesis to medicine 藥 and doctors of the medical tradition 醫藥, which these elite authors regarded as part of their cultural reform program. Hence, the juxtaposition of spiritual healing by Wū versus healing by medicine often appears listed in the litany of social ills that the Neo-Confucian program sought to rectify. A late Qīng (1900) gazetteer from Pǔchéng County 浦城縣 in northern Fújiàn assembles many longstanding complaints into a concise series:

> In weddings, people compete with ornate opulence; in celebrations and funeral condolences they tend to overstep ritual propriety. When daughters are born, few are reared. When sick they are slow to invite medial doctors but urgent [to seek] Wū-Zhù [lit. mediums and invokers]. In funerals they perform Buddhist rites, even if they don't have resources [to cover] the [funeral] expenses. They believe in the

acts are not regarded as rituals 法事 in themselves. Rather, the term generally applies to any ritual procedure with stages and a fixed liturgy. In Ritual Master ceremony, such stages usually build to acts of ritual transformation or transfer, such as the Sacrifice to Remove Adversity 祭解, Presenting Cash to Supplement Fortune 進錢補運, Building a Bridge and Crossing over the Limit 造橋過限, an Opening of the Light 開光 to animate spirit-images and so on. In the Supplementing Fortune and Building the Bridge rites, the Ritual Master troupe performs the ceremony itself, and at key moments the Spirit-medium(s) often enter trance and further facilitate the ritual, but usually do not remain in trance for the duration of the entire ceremony, as it is the Ritual Master and/or Minor Rite Troupe that actually performs the ritual sequence 法事. Hence, the kind of rite implied by the term 法事 in modern Pénghú and Táiwān is normally not something that a Spirit-medium could perform on their own, but it is unclear how precise a meaning it had for Xiè in the early seventeenth century.

> theories of the geomancers, and [because of Fēng-shuǐ considerations] they keep the encoffined dead unburied sometimes for ten years.[84]
> 婚嫁競華侈慶唁頗躍禮。生女多不育。疾病緩於延醫急於巫祝。喪作佛事，所費不資，信堪輿家言，停柩或十年不葬。

The customs criticized here are among the social problems most consistently cited in late imperial gazetteers, along with feuding, gambling, enthusiasm for theatre, and a penchant for lawsuits. Moreover, many of these practices are the very customs that the Neo-Confucian ritual program sought to reform and replace. Within this context, the antagonism between the medical tradition and ritual healing by Wū is often raised alongside other ritual concerns, primarily funeral customs, but often weddings as well, which critics fault for their ostentation. In rare cases this criticism of competing ritual forms is expressed in the converse, citing exemplary adherence to the Neo-Confucian program, as can be found in the Qiánlóng 28 (1763) *Quánzhōu Prefectural Gazetteer*, where a passage commends the local gentry for their fidelity to proscribed orthopraxy:

> The families of the gentry class are of a lofty spirit and form bonds of association based on moral righteousness. If they fall ill then they all follow [the methods of] medicine; in funeral affairs they use the [Neo-Confucian] Rites of Libation. [85]
> 士夫之家意氣交尚道義相先。若疾病悉從醫藥，喪事用祭奠

But the same source cites an older Huì-ān County gazetteer that observes

> The people of Quánzhōu are rather deluded by talk of ghosts and spirits, thus in cases of illness, death, and funerals they do not accord with proper ritual.[86]
> 泉人頗惑於鬼神之說，故疾病死喪未合禮。

This passage reinforces what the later (1900) *Pǔchéng County Gazetteer* implies, namely that as part of the Neo-Confucian reform agenda, the opposition between medicine and Wū fell under the

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[84] 光緒 26 (1900) *Pǔchéng County Gazetteer* 浦城縣志, 6:2a. De Groot (*Religious System of the Chinese* 1:IV102-140) devotes an entire chapter to the "Interval between Coffining and Burial" that discusses this prominent and widespread practice in the late Qīng.
[85] Qiánlóng 28 Quǎnzhōu Fu Zhi 20:3a.
[86] Qiánlóng 28 Quǎnzhōu Fu Zhi 20:10a

rubric of proper ritual. The 1871 *Fújiàn Provincial Gazetteer*, citing earlier sources likewise reports that "the [Míng] Lóngqìng (1567-1572) [Quánzhōu] *Prefectural Gazetteer*[87] says:

> When performing funeral rites they employ Buddhists, in cases of disease they seek [cures through] talismans and prayers. The Huì-ān County Gazetteer says, the common people are rather inclined to serve ghosts and use ritual to avert disaster. In a small number of poor villages there are no medicines or doctors. If there are cases of illness then they pray to spirits.
> 隆慶[泉州府]府志云居喪用浮屠，疾病求符禱。惠安縣志云俗頗務鬼禨祥。小數窮鄉無醫藥。有病則禱於神。[88]

Though the tension between the Wū and medical traditions is ancient and fundamental, in early-modern Fújiàn this discourse and cultural agenda can be traced to the Southern Sòng *Gazetteer of the Three Mountains* [*Region*, i.e. Fúzhōu] 三山志 (*Sān Shān Zhì*). In the section on local customs it states that in the Qìnglì 慶歷 period (1041-1048) of the Northern Sòng, the eminent literatus Cài Xiāng 蔡襄 (1012-1067), while serving as magistrate of Fúzhōu "exhorted [the people] to use medicine" 勸用醫, and the text continues with a stele inscription by Cài in which he laments that

> In Mín it is customary to regard medicine as sinister and regard Wū as the right way. Families afflicted by disease rely on Wū to search out and investigate evil spirits, while those who pass through the doors of medical doctors are but two or three out of ten, hence the benefits of medicine passed on to [the populace] are few.[89]
> 閩俗左醫右巫。疾家依巫索祟，而過醫門十纔二三，故醫之傳益少。

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[87] The *Zhōngguó Difāng Zhì Liánhé Mùlù* 中國地方志聯合目錄(p.533) only lists a Wànlì 萬曆 Quánzhōu Prefectural Gazetter, not a Lóngqìng edition.
[88] 福建通志 56:3b.
[89] Chúnxī *Sān Shān Zhì* 三山志, j.39 土俗類一，戒喻, Scripta Sinica edition.

The same section further complains that people of Fúzhōu "with illness are addicted to Wū, with funerals are addicted to Buddhism, and with weddings are addicted to extravagance"疾溺於巫喪溺於佛婚溺於財. Consistently throughout the gazetteer literature, the Wū and the healing they provide are portrayed as one item on the short list of prevailing ritual practices for which the Neo-Confucian reform agenda advocated their own, putatively "orthodox" replacements.[90] But as the tone and admissions of these sources make clear, this Neo-Confucian reform agenda failed to make a significant impact on prevailing custom, and gained only partial acceptance among the elites themselves.

The frequency with which late imperial gazetteers of Fújiàn and Táiwān mention this opposition between Wū and medicine is remarkable. Though the language is stereotypical, for such an officially unseemly custom to be referenced so often suggests that even where this trope as a textual practice echoed older sources, it referred to a real and prominent social phenomenon that could neither be eradicated nor ignored. Indeed, language from a Sòng source is cited in the 1763 *Quánzhōu Prefectural Gazetteer*, which quotes a poem by Chén Mì 陳宓 (d.1230), a Pǔtián 莆田 native and Sòng magistrate of Ānxī County 安溪縣 who wrote,

[90] Interestingly, another commonly cited social ill attributed to local temperament is the proclivity to file lawsuits over disputes, and thereby directly engage government offices. The Qiánlóng 27 Fúníng County Gazetteer 福寧府志 乾隆 27 comments that "The people of the county are frugal and miserly, [and though] by nature at ease and unhurried, in disputes they easily file lawsuits; when ill they are fond of Wū 其俗儉嗇，其性紓緩，爭者易訟；病者好巫。(卷 14 奉祀 34b.). A Republican era source, the 1929 (民國 18) *Pǔchéng County Gazetteer* 浦城縣志 reproduces this same language and further adds an interesting observation of gender roles: "[The people's] customs are frugal and miserly, their personalities relaxed and leisurely, [but] conflicts easily lead to lawsuits, [while] with illness they are fond of Wū. Along the coast and inland estuaries, their womenfolk typically perform the same work as the men." 其俗儉嗇，其性紓緩，爭者宜訟，病者好巫，海濱幾及洙泗其女率作同於男。(禮俗 12a).

> The people of today believe in Wū and burn large amounts of paper [ghost money and religious objects]. When sick they do not seek out medical doctors. 宋安溪令陳宓詩云: 時人信巫紙多燒，病不求醫。[91]

As a long-running antagonism in both the culture at large and in social commentary, late imperial sources frequently speak of Wū as preferred by the population over medicine. Examples are numerous:

Táiwān County 臺灣府 (1763):

> In cases of disease [people] beseech the spirits and do not [make use of] medicine, Wū-xí [performing] like madmen.
> 病則求神而勿藥，巫覡如狂。[92]

Níngyáng County 寧洋縣：(1874):

> With diseases people rely on deities and make little use of medicine and doctors.
> 疾病按神少用醫藥[93]

Wǔpíng County 武平縣（1867):

> The old city gazetteer says the people are industrious and diligent in planting and harvesting, and do not live by being merchants. When sick they do not take medicine but instead revere ghosts.
> 邑舊志勤勞稼穡不事商賈，病不服藥而崇鬼。[94]

Tíngzhōu County 汀州縣（1867):

> The people exclusively employ "Master Wū" and do not trust medicine and doctors. They esteem the martial and rarely cultivate literary ability.
> 專事師巫，不任醫藥。尚武少文。[95]

Fújiàn Provincial Gazetteer 福建通志 (1871), on Shàowǔ Prefecture 邵武府:

> The people here put their faith in ghosts and are fond of temple-cults; they rarely hire the services of medical doctors. 信鬼好祠，罕延醫。[96]

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[91]乾隆 28（1763）泉州府志， 20:10a.
[92]乾隆 28 (1763) 續修臺灣府志, j.23
[93]同治 13 (1874) 寧洋縣志 j.2, 輿地志, 14b.
[94] 同治 6 (1867) 汀州府志, 6:4b; paraphrase cited in 八閩通志 3:7a.
[95]同治汀州府志, j.6,風俗, 5a. The text here cites the (older) provincial gazetteer 通志.
[96]同治 10 福建通志,（邵武府）57:17b （The text cites this from the 晉地理志）

The same 1871 Provincial Gazetteer on Píngnán County 屏南縣:

> The land is barren and the people poor; simple and crude they rarely cultivate literary ability. They highly value Wū and esteem ghosts; when disease spreads they are without doctors or medicine.
> 地瘠民貧樸陋少文，貴巫尚鬼，疾病無醫藥。[97]

The 1873 *Dōngyíng Shìlüè* (on Táiwān):

> Southerners esteem ghosts, and Táiwān is especially serious. When sick they put no faith in medicine, but place their faith in Wū.
> 南人尚鬼，臺灣尤甚。病不信醫，而信巫。[98]

These and the other sources cited here make abundantly clear that Wū as healers were ubiquitous throughout the province, in cities and rural areas, and that the elites who composed these sources saw Wū as ritual experts who offered an ultimately more popular alternative to the elite medical tradition that they consistently advocated as part of their broader ritual reform program.[99]

That poorer classes could not afford medicines is surely a factor in their preference for spirits over doctors, but ritual services, especially more involved procedures, were not free either, and the expenses lavished upon religious rites in general are likewise often criticized by these same gazetteer authors as excessive and wasteful. Hence, a simple economic explanation which imagines ritual healing to be more financially accessible to the poor cannot in and of itself completely explain this widespread preference for ritual healing by Wū. Moreover, the reader should recall that these same sources say the common people did not simply prefer Wū, ghosts, and deities; some report that people positively feared medicines and the medical tradition as

[97] 同治 10 福建通志, citing 福州府志, (屏南縣) 55:10b
[98] 東瀛識略, j.3. This source is further discussed below.
[99] The status of physicians as specialized practitioners in government and gentry society is a more complex question. See Chao 1995.

dangerous. The remarkable 1871 Fújiàn Provincial Gazetteer relates that in Xiānyóu County 仙遊縣

> The people have a deep dread of medicine; deluded by concepts of disaster and fortune, the people thus place great importance on ghosts and deities.
> 民愿憚醫藥，惑禍福故其民重鬼神。[100]

The 1749 Yǒngfú County 永福縣 Gazetteer also observes that

> The common people are rather inclined to put faith in ghosts, and in cases of disease they are afraid to take medicine and only [employ] Wū-xí.
> 俗頗信鬼，病憚服藥惟巫覡是問。[101]

And as was cited previously, the 1754 Fúzhōu Prefectural Gazetteer goes so far as to say that

> In Min [Fújiàn] popular custom, when there are epidemic diseases they only trust in Wū, and say that if you see a doctor you are sure to die.
> 閩俗病瘟獨信巫，謂謁醫必死。[102]

These statements describe a widespread distrust of medicine among a large segment of the population. The extent to which such sentiments were the product of rumors or of experience is hard to say. Like attempts to repress or reform Popular cults, and replace Buddhist and Daoist funerals, elite advocacy of the medical profession appears to have been similarly unsuccessful. And if there was some eventual success in popularizing the efficacy of pharmaceutical medicines, the form this success eventually took was not what these Confucianizing elites had in mind.

At some stage in the late imperial period, this historic rivalry between ritual healing and medicine witnessed an adaptation within temple cults of the Common Religion whereby local spirit-cults began dispensing medicine, with deities themselves –through spirit-possessed sedan-

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[100]福建通志 55:33b（The text cites the 仙遊圖經）

[101]乾隆 14 永福縣志 1:19. The text continues with a standard Confucian litany of popular social ills: "Mourners employ Buddhist [funeral rites], while poor families sell produce for a living. The people of nearby villages are also somewhat fond of feuding and filing lawsuits." 居喪用浮屠，貧家粥產為之。 近鄉民亦稍好格鬥，爭訟...This entire passage is repeated verbatim by the 民國 11 永泰縣志 j.7 禮俗志 7:36b.

[102] 乾隆 19 福州府志 24:4b.

chairs, spirit-writing, and Spirit-mediums– now selecting and prescribing medicines for patients that were procured at regular pharmacies. In other words, deities came to replace the role of the physician.

This practice appears to have been widespread during late Qīng, Japanese, and early Republican periods in Táiwān, but despite its near total disappearance following the KMT-era prohibition of unauthorized distribution of medicines, and the subsequent development of a modern medical infrastructure, such spiritist selection of medicine is still sometimes practiced today. Historically, it is unclear when or where the traditional fear and rejection of medicine first shifted to a religious appropriation of pharmaceutical prescription, but a mid-Qīng (1762) source from Zhāngzhōu Prefecture points to an interesting and contradictory state of affairs in which people of Hǎichéng county 海澄縣 are said to have been selecting medicines through spiritist methods, and in the lingering apprehension toward medicine as potentially harmful, this source points to a particular set of social factors that inclined people to be wary of using medicine:

> When ill one must seek medical services to remedy the problem. The lower classes of the common people have a special method of prayer to a spirit in which they carry a spirit-image, and go out to gather medicine. They claim the deity's spiritual power can fathom the medicine, but how can a deity do this? It's only the people who carry the spirit-image who preposterously do this. If they take the medicine and it has an effect then they give the credit to the deity, but if the medicine is not effective [and the patient dies] then they say it was calculated by their allotted lifespan. Probably all the wives and children ignorantly believe using medicine [alone, without consulting spirits] would be more unfilial, as quack-doctors kill people, and thus there are laws and frequent proclamations [about such crimes]. [103] Nowadays people usually don't seek out medicine and doctors, but instead follow earthen idols and wooden figurines and entrust them with power over life and death. There truly

[103] In a Japanese-era Taiwanese ballad, this accusation befalls a dutiful wife who buys medicine for her husband, who then dies, after which her sister-in-law charges that she used the medicine to poison her husband.

> is nothing more lamentable than this. The Sòng scholar Caì Duān Míng [the same Caì Ráng cited above] said that people of Pǔtián's [custom of placing] the Wū-xí in charge of disease should be rigorously broken off, and to eliminate its [root] cause one should select the more intelligent members of common society and instruct them in how to use medicines to treat disease. This vulgar custom is still passed on, not just in the [Haĭ] Chéng county seat alone, thus [continuing] as in bygone eras. Those who understand Principle are unable to enlighten them.
> 病必求醫事理之。常俗下有專禱於神及擡舁神像，出行採藥，假託神靈究之。神何能為？惟擡舁神像者妄為之耳。服效歸功於神；不效謂之壽算。蓋盡夫人子不知醫比於不孝，庸醫殺人，律有常憲。今蓋不求醫藥而徒任之土偶木俑付以生死之權不亦大可哀哉。宋蔡端明學士治莆謂莆人巫覡主病宜痛斷絕因擇民之聰明者，教以醫藥使治病。陋俗相沿不獨澄邑，誰昔然矣。炳理者不可悟哉。[104]

While this 18th C. gazetteer gives only a general description of how people carried a spirit-image to "gather medicines," it is to the best of my knowledge the earliest record of this historic adaptation whereby deities of the Common Religion (in theory) prescribed medicines of the elite medical tradition. Importantly, we also learn one major set of reasons why people were afraid of medicine in the first place: people were likely to die from misuse of medicine, and in such an event, charges of intentional poisoning might well follow. Moreover, this fear of medicine and the specter of legal entanglement were connected to the phenomenon of "quack doctors who kill people" 庸醫殺人, reportedly the cause of frequent official proclamations.

Quack doctors aside, this conundrum of accidental poisoning forms a plot-device in a Japanese-era Taiwanese ballad-pamphlet 歌仔冊 titled *Newest Song of Praise on Descending into the Yīn [realm]* 最近落陰褒歌 cited by Schipper (1985a) in his study of "vernacular" Daoism. In this lyric ballad, a faithful wife procures medicine for her ill-fated husband, and when this fails

[104]乾隆 27 (1762) 海澄縣志, 卷 15 風俗 8a-9a.

she first summons a doctor, who believes the patient beyond saving, and then turns to a series of religious rites, and even hires a Ritual Master. But after the husband dies, the dutiful wife is then suspected by the husband's younger brother of poisoning the man.[105] To redeem her honor she then seeks out the soul of her departed husband in the underworld, all in response to this charge of (mis)using medicine for the clandestine purpose of poisoning a relative.[106]

In the *Veritable Records of the Ming* 明實錄(Míng Shílù), poisoning is listed in the standard language of serious crimes that are not included in proclamations of amnesty.[107] Hence in the late imperial period there was a notable sensitivity toward the possibility of poisoning with medicine, both intentional and accidental. In a Míng vernacular tale by Lìng Méng-chū 凌濛初 (1580-1644), the protagoness explains that her birth as a female is karmic punishment, as "in a previous life I was a man, but because I mistakenly used medicine 醫藥 that killed someone, for this reason I was punished with being born female."[108] Likewise, according to his Daoist Canon

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[105] This text, and a library of ballad-pamphlets are available online (June 2019): http://cdm.lib.ntu.edu.tw/cdm/ref/collection/kua-a-tsheh/id/27175

[106] This same ballad-text is cited by Schipper ("Vernacular and Classical,"36), as the journey to the underworld is adapted from the Lúshān/Minor Rite liturgy found in southern Táiwān and across the region (the ballad itself was likely composed in Xiàmén). Schipper dismisses the narrative framework as a "flimsy intrigue", as he attempts to explain the narrative setting generically: "for example, a man, having lost a friend, goes to the temple where he finds a medium who takes him on a journey." (1985a:36). This is not an accurate summary what happens in the ballad in question, and I am not aware of other examples of this motif in the overwhelmingly secular ballad-pamphlet literature, in which religiously-themed ballads make up a tiny minority of titles. As discussed elsewhere, the coincidental nature of this one Ballad-pamphlet, in which a particularly evocative Minor Rite liturgical text had been cribbed and incorporated into a ballad, is evidently one of the main factors which led Schipper into the mistaken belief that the Minor Rite invocations and the Ballad-pamphlet genre were related, which in turn was pivotal to his "vernacular" thesis.

[107] See for example 明實錄，英宗，卷 53 正統 4 年 3 月 / 1 日 (Scripta Sinica Database): "plotting to kill parents, grandparents, wives, concubines, killing husbands, female servants, killing co-conspirators in a plot to murder, poisoning [possibly, witchcraft-poisoning], suffocation by demonic entities, using poison medicine to kill people and forcible robbery are not pardoned" 謀殺父母祖父母妻妾殺夫奴婢殺主謀故殺人蠱毒魘魅毒藥殺人強盜不赦.

[108] 初刻拍案驚奇 4, 程元玉店肆代償錢 十一娘雲岡縱譚俠. The protagoness continues, "but now I have already come to completion, having cultivated immortality and departed" 出前世是個男子，因誤用醫藥殺人，故此罰為女子，今已功成，脩仙去了。

hagiographies the prototypical Daoist Ritual Officer Sā Shǒujiān 薩守堅 took up the religious life precisely because "he once studied medicine, but because he mistakenly administered medicine and killed someone, he thereupon abandoned medicine" and went in search of the 30th Celestial Master.[109]

While this topic deserves more detailed investigation, these varied sources ranging from Daoist Canon hagiography to Míng fiction, Míng law, and even an early 20th C. Mínnán Ballad-pamphlet together draw a consistent portrait which reveals the fear of medicine reported in gazetteers –and cited as one reason why healing by Wū was preferred over healing by medicine 醫藥 – arose not just from the possibility of accidental death by poisoning, but was compounded by the additional fear of being charged with the crime of deliberately poisoning someone, especially a family member, if the patient died after taking medicine.

And yet despite these fears and the ancient discourse of antagonism between Wū and medicine, the 18th century Haǐchéng County gazetteer confirms that by the mid-Qing temple-cults were using spiritist techniques to select and obtain medicine as a healing method within the domain of the Common Religion, and for devotees of these cults, temple-groups and their deities had wrested control over these medicines away from the medical professionals. By the early 19th C., this practice has become so widespread that it was listed in the synopsis of social ills reported in the 1807 *Revised Táiwān County Gazetteer, Sequel Edition*:

> The common people place their faith in Wū and ghosts; when ill they request medicines from spirits. They treat life lightly and are fond of fighting, and good at forming gangs, all of which are the old customs of Zhāng[zhōu] and Quán[zhōu].

[109] Sā's biographies can be found in 歷世真仙體道通鑑續編 j.4 ZHDZ 47:602-3; and the 16th C. 搜神記 from the 續道藏, ZHDZ 45:534.

俗信巫鬼，病者乞藥於神，輕生喜鬥，善聚黨，亦皆漳、泉舊俗。[110]

By the 20th C., this practice had come to be associated with the new, westernizing discourse of "superstition," as witnessed by the Republican-era *Déhuá County Gazetteer* 德化縣志:

> When people happen to become infected with disease, if it's not too serious then they summon Wū to employ talismans, but if the disease is serious then they take out a deity to fetch medicine. Frequently on account of this people do harm to themselves. Recently, the middle and upper classes of society, when ill only employ medical doctors, and no longer repeat the superstitions of before.[111]
> 人家偶沾疾病，輕則召巫行符、重則迎神取藥。往往因此自傷其生。近則上中社會病唯延醫、非復如前之迷信矣。

While the label of superstition 迷信 (míxìn) has appeared in the critic's rhetorical arsenal, the admission that the middle and upper strata of society "no longer repeat the superstitions of before" implies that such superstitions were, at least in the past, hardly limited to the lower classes. We also learn that people were prioritizing religious healing methods according to the severity of the illness, and the preference for medicine 藥 in more severe cases suggests that in this process of adaptation within the Common Religion, medicine was increasingly seen as more efficacious than traditional talismanic healing. Though evidently still dangerous, with the deities they trusted prescribing medicines, people evidently concluded that the benefits outweighed the risks.

Interestingly, another Republican-era source reports the inverse procedure, whereby patients are said to first try medical treatment, and when this fails then turn to ritual healing by Wū –a pattern still common in contemporary Táiwān. In depicting these practices, the 1919 *Zhènghé*

[110] 嘉慶 12 (1807)《續修臺灣縣志》j.1 (ctext.org edition).
[111] 民國 16 (1927) 德化縣誌，2:6a.

County Gazetteer 正和縣志 gives a remarkably detailed account of Spirit-mediums, complete with an anecdote of how a calculating Spirit-medium was confronted by a skeptical passer-by:

> Among the common people, when someone takes ill but medical treatment is without effect, then they summon a Wū to enter their home and perform a Núo [exorcism]. The common people call this "descending into the youth [medium]", [in which] they say a spirit attaches itself to the youth's body, and then it may give instructions about medicines, or perhaps about a ritual to eliminate [adversity]. Perhaps in one or two cases this proves effective, but in a large majority there is no effect. Master Sòng Tuàn once lamented of Central Mín [Fújiàn]: "southerners by nature revere ghosts, and Central Mín this has long become custom. Thus they make a fox-spirit to speak, and mostly by organizing a club of hoodlums then take contributions of cash to put on a ritual procession, with old and young in streams running after cow-ghosts and snake-spirits. And if there should be some seasonal calamity, often [a spirit] will descend into the body of a Wū and on people's behalf mutter incantations in a fierce manner, with a red scarf on their head, leaping and tossing about, with bare feet dangling down they utter: "Sunshine, sunshine suddenly rain!" or "Sickness of the sick, [let its] seriousness [be removed to] the eastern quarter." There was an impoverished old man with a staff of weeds who loudly wailed, "a ten year-old child who accidentally offended a spirit and incurred its wrath has been lying sick for ten days. The spiritually-powerful Wū has fortunately obtained [the spirit's] reprieve. Seeking to obtain the deity's good graces, [you] must contribute nine hundred [worth] of millet. Being hard to come by, [this amount can] be divided into individual [installments]." A passerby heard this talk and was outraged; with both brows furrowed [in anger] he flogged the Wū with bamboo, destroyed the Wū's spirit[-image], and had the sick [boy] rise and eat some porridge.[112]
>
> 民間疾病醫藥罔效輒請巫入家為儺，俗謂之降童，云神附其身，或教以藥，或教之禳，然效者一二，不效居其多數。宋衮之先生閩中吟云南人素尚鬼，閩中久成俗，遂使狐鬼詞,多於編氓屋，醵錢輸報賽，老幼紛徵逐牛鬼與蛇神。時亦為禍福，往往降巫身，為人咀咒猙獰，紅帕首騰擲赤垂足曰暘暘忽雨，曰病病者篤東隣。有窮叟杖藜方嚮哭自云十歲兒神怒偶然觸臥病已經旬，靈巫幸見恤，欲得神明歡，須蠲九百粟，難得自分成煢獨。有客聞此言氣憤雙眉蹙笞巫毀其神，病者起食粥。

[112] 民國 8 正和縣志, j.12 禮俗 9a.

Interestingly, the author here finds that "in one or two cases" at least, the Spirit-mediums' treatments proved effective, even if the vast majority were "without effect." Moreover, these Spirit-mediums are described in classic fashion with streaming hair and bare feet, and with a red cloth tied around their heads, a practice which is in fact widespread among Spirit-mediums, even if a red belt or sash around the waist is more common in Táiwān. Like such red sashes and other aspects of the medium's bodily practices, these are meant to mark the presence of the god and divination of the medium during the carefully demarcated possession-trance. Likewise, this passage reports that while possessed, mediums were wont to "give instructions about medicines" and "rituals to eliminate [adversity]." While the prescription of medicines has declined in modern practice, Spirit-mediums are still among the chief agents specifying the performance of rituals for both individuals and temple-communities. In Táinán and its environs, a majority of such rituals are in turn performed by Ritual Masters, or are Red-Headed rites to be performed by Daoist priests acting as Ritual Masters.

In general, gazetteers begin providing much more detailed information about customs and rituals from the very late 19th century onward, and the 1929 *Tóng-ān County Gazetteer* 同安縣志 exemplifies this trend. In a section of the Rituals and Customs 禮俗 chapter entitled "Superstitions" 迷信, this source provides a remarkable series of enumerated paragraphs dedicated to depicting particular religious customs, and the first two items in this long section are both spiritist techniques whereby deities select medicines. Though the prescription of medicine by such means has greatly diminished from its Qīng and early 20th C. heyday, certain practices described in both sections are still very common in Táinán, down to many details, even where the techniques

themselves are no longer connected purely with the selection and prescription of medicine, but rather with writing talismans, directing healing energy, and purifying spaces.

The first practice, called "Carrying the Bodhisattva" 扛菩薩 involves placing a spirit-image in a smaller sedan (here carried by two people, but in Táinán and Táiwān generally, four is more common)[113], and then summoning the deity into the image in the sedan. When the spirit descends, the men carrying the sedan (especially the one who stands in the front) claim they feel pushes and pulls from the god directing them where to go. Though usually people are not fully possessed when carrying the sedan, but rather trained to be "sensitive" to the god, sometimes one or more people will experience partial and even complete trance-states. With rapid and at times violent movements, the possessed spirit-sedan is one of the major tools of the temple-cult, and together with the miniature chair, aka "little hand sedan" 手轎仔, these spirit-possessed sedans are the main instruments for spirit-writing. The 1929 Tóng-ān County gazetteer describes how in the home region of the divine doctor the Great Lord Who Protects Life 保生大帝 (Bǎoshēng Dàdì), the possessed sedan is used to select medicines in an urban environment:

> (1) Carrying the Bodhisattva [in a sedan]. The common people trust in Wū and ghosts with greater sincerity than they trust in the medical tradition. When there is sickness in a family they hire two men to carry [the image of] a bodhisattva [in a sedan], and most often they carry the Grand Emperor Who Protects Life [保生大帝 Bǎoshēng Dàdì]. With one person following behind banging on a gong, they parade along the streets, and when they come to a house in which pharmaceutical medicines 藥品 are stored, then the god comes to a stop and doesn't move. This is called "demanding medicine." A member of the household [with the medicine] holds incense and in a low voice whispers the names of pharmaceutical medicines and watches to see if the deity moves

[113] In Táinán (and most of Táiwān), where there are two people facilitating communication with a god, they use the small divination chair or "little hand sedan" 手轎仔, which is used in a manner similar to the peachwood divining planchette described in the second section cited below.

> forward or backward, thereby deciding which one to go and select. The deity may suddenly charge or spiral in a circle, in which case they toss the divining-blocks to decide, and with a "sacred block" or a "negative [Yīn] block" to confirm or deny the decision. They may go to a pharmacy and have the pharmacist chant the names of medicines and toss the divination-blocks to determine the selection. Regardless whether the particular medical preparation is appropriate to the symptoms or not, [the patients] all take it. No doubt there are many who lose their lives on account of this, and in such cases they go so far as to use "Heaven's decreed fate" as an excuse. This is indeed stupid.
>
> （甲）扛菩薩。俗信巫鬼，篤於信醫。病家每僱兩人扛一菩薩以扛保生大帝為多。一人鳴鑼隨後沿街遊行，遇人家藏藥品神停不行，名討藥。其家拈香低聲念藥品視神進退以定去取.神或旋繞奔突，則以筊擲之，得聖筊合陰筊否或到藥鋪令藥鋪唱藥名而筊決之。無論是否對症或成方與否均服之。不疑甚有因而致命者，竟以天命諉之吁亦愚矣。[114]

This section begins like most late imperial sources on the Wū, emphasizing that people still trust more in Wū –ritual experts of the Common Religion– than in practitioners of the elite-oriented medical tradition. But now the medicines and pharmaceutical preparations of the (classical) medical tradition are regarded as efficacious and desirable, but selected and prescribed by the deity, rather than a mortal physician. Importantly, the god here credited as the main agent of this pharmaceutical dispensation is the famous deified physician and Tóng-ān native son, the Grand Emperor Who Protects Life, Bǎoshēng Dàdì 保生大帝.[115] As a deified physician, famous for miracles of healing in life and after death, it may well be the case that the explicitly medical symbolism of the cult, as opposed to the broad healing orientation of the Common Religion in general, may have been a factor in bringing medicine into the same religious sphere that so many sources say was typically hostile to the classical medical tradition.

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[114]民國 18（1929）同安縣志, 22:7a-b.

[115] On the cult and hagiography of Bǎoshēng Dàdì see Dean, *Taoism and Popular Religion in Southeast China*, 69-169.

The exact methods used here to select medicines are still common practice in Táinán, though now divorced from the specific task of determining medical prescriptions. When manifesting a deity through the distinctive, spirit-possessed sedan known as the "Grand Sedan" 大駕, the Ritual Master or other manager of the séance uses the same technique described here, and when the sedan has come to a stop will whisper questions to the god's image within the woven rattan sedan, and the resulting forward or backward movements of the palanquin indicate a "yes" or "no" answer. In lieu of medical prescriptions, the issues clarified in this way now usually concern the disposition of talismans written by the god through the carrying pole of the sedan, and thus in each case determine whether it should it be presently burned in front of the person, sent home and placed in their house, or later burned into water and consumed.[116]

As these apothecaries were certainly not giving medicine away for free, it seems reasonable to suspect that the temples "carrying the bodhisattva" had a working relationship with the families and pharmacies from which the medicine was procured, a situation paralleled in the Taiwanese port town of Ānpíng, where spirit-mediums historically, and occasionally still today are known to have practiced writing prescriptions for medicine and sending clients to specific, affiliated pharmacies.[117] The participation of the pharmacists is likewise interesting. Where they simply acting as venal accomplices, or did the phenomenon accord with their own religious understanding? Given the social prominence of the cult of Bǎoshēng Dàdì, and the traditional, enchanted worldview reinforced through community ritual, these pharmacists likely perceived this

[116] This particular practice, and the distinctive spirit-sedan called the Grand Carriage 大駕 are discussed in my separate survey of religion in Táinán.
[117] According to local informants, during the late Qīng and Japanese periods, mediums in the Zhōu Lóng Gōng 周龍宮 on Yánpíng Street 延平街 would send clients to the pharmacy next door.

practice of gods prescribing medicine from vantages more complex than that of sheer incredulous opportunism.

Perhaps reflecting the importance of Bǎoshēng Dàdì in local religious culture, the highly informative *Tóng-Ān County Gazetteer* continues with still more description of this Qīng and Republican-era adaptation of medicine in the Common Religion. The second of ten enumerated sections on "superstition" begins by discussing Spirit-mediums, and then shifts to discuss spirit-writing, an ostensibly more middle-and-upper class practice whose specialties, this source tells us, include writing medical prescriptions:

> (2) Jumping Spirit-mediums. In addition to carrying the bodhisattva there are also Jumping Spirit-mediums. Whenever people are sick they go see a deity and inquire about their auspicious and unfavorable [fortune]. The spirit then attaches itself to a person and speaks, saying a certain ghost is causing spiritual mischief, and then casually instructs the person to prepare sacrificial food offerings and ghost-money, [and claims that] making offerings to and sending off [the ghost] will afford them protection, and that there is no ritual act without numinous effect. After this they take their leave. There are various kinds of Spirit-mediums, though most are rough young hoodlums who make this their occupation. Naked and with hair streaming down, with a red sash[118]and a white skirt, sword in hand he cuts his mouth and back so the blood comes running down in streams. Sometimes they cut their tongues and use the blood to write talismans; sometimes they toss a ball of iron nails or roll over on a bed of nails. They also climb over a ladder of swords and walk over burning coals, fire-pots, and fire forts.[119] If they're not called Zhū, Xíng and Lǐ, then they are called Royal Sire [Wángye] Chí, the Emperor of the Five Manifestations, Sire of the Central Altar, and the Two Great Emissaries. Local officials have repeatedly issued strict prohibitions, but in the end these vile customs cannot be

[118] 紅兜 (hóng doù). This could refer to the stylized child's apron worn by (many) Spirit-mediums; I have translated it as red sash, as Spirit-mediums are still often tied around the waist or torso with one immediately after they become possessed, and removed after withdrawal from trance, just as the apron put on and removed as markers of trance-identification. This could also be taken to mean a red head-scarf or other headgear, something of course more associated with Ritual Masters, but not unknown to Spirit-mediums. Such manner of dress is, as mentioned above, indicative of the axis of similarity among Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums.
[119] 火城. This appears to refer to the practice of piling firewood into a kind of walled enclosure,with two gates or openings that when set ablaze, Spirit-mediums and men carrying spirit-sedans then walk through.

eliminated. Aside from this there is [the technique of] holding the divination planchette. Its method involves taking a peachwood branch with a two-pronged fork shape, and then carving its head into the shape of a brush. They get two men with each holding one of the handles, and chant invocations to summon the deity, [and after the god descends] the peach branch leaps up and writes characters, and especially writes [prescriptions for] medicine. Sometimes they write poems and songs with style and meter that you can intone; some are quite spiritually efficacious, while others have no effect whatsoever. This is especially difficult to explain.

（乙）跳乩童。扛菩薩之外又有跳乩童；凡人有病輒向神問吉凶。神每憑人而言，謂某鬼作祟，隨口派牲醴菜飯冥錢祭送可保，無事不驗，乃歸。諸數為乩童者，多係無賴惡少以此為業。裸體披髮紅兜白裙手執刀劍自劏口背，血涔涔下，或割舌以血為符，或擲鐵釘球或翻釘床，或過刀梯或過火炭火爐火城。非言朱邢李即言池王爺、五顯帝、中壇爺、二大使屢經地方官嚴禁而陋俗終不可除。此外有扶乩，法取桃李之有兩叉者，削其頭如筆狀，令兩人個以一手持其柄，念助[?]咒語請神，桃枝則躍躍動書字、書藥甚。或抒寫詩歌朗朗可誦，有甚靈驗者，亦有毫無影響者，殊難索解。[120]

As with many late Qīng and Republican gazetteers, this passage uses the more specific, colloquial, and modern term for Spirit-medium, jī tǒng 乩童, rather than the ancient literary term Wū, which was used in the opening of this "Superstition" section. Such broadening adoption of colloquial nomenclature in gazetteer literature may be linked to the expanding coverage and finer detail given to depicting traditional religious practices.

What follows is a general but representative description of ritual healing. As is common today, Spirit-mediums diagnose the problem, and locate the cause as emanating from a spiritual entity that can be placated through ritual propitiation and then sent-off. In modern Táiwān, the rituals which achieve this propitiatory placation are usually performed by a Ritual Master (or

[120] 民國 18（1929）同安縣志, 22:7a-b (610-611).

Daoist priest in Red-Headed capacity), though often involving a Spirit-medium as well.[121] De Groot describes such ritual healing involving Spirit-mediums and their altar "club," as he aptly calls it, and though he does not mention Ritual Masters in this context, as invocations are chanted to induce spirit-possession, as well as to install the cultic elements of the altar, some kind of Ritual Master or Minor Rite-like performance is probably entailed here. As found across the Mínnán littoral, de Groot describes how the Spirit-medium uses the Five Camps Heads 五營頭 and those of the Thirty-Six Official Generals to skewer his flesh.[122] As these two subordinate pantheons and their assemblies of "heads" are all emblematic crystalizations of the Tantric-Popular Ritual Master tradition, their enshrinement and use in ritual would imply some form of Ritual Master performance.

Moreover, several important Wángye (王爺, lit. Royal Sire) deities are named here, along with a few other major gods as the primary spirits of these mediums. Save the ambiguous "Two Emissaries," all of the gods mentioned here have important and active temples in the Táinán region, including the adjacent centers of Chí 池 and Xíng 邢 Wángye, the Pǔjì Dìan 普濟殿 and Gòngshàn Táng 共善堂, respectively, both of which stand just some meters on either side of the Héshèng Táng. Likewise Zhū 朱 Wángye is one of several main deities of the Miàoshòu Gōng 妙壽宮 in Ānpíng, whose principle god is Tóng-ān patron saint, Bǎoshēng Dàdì. All of these gods feature prominently in the Minor Rite invocation texts.

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[121] The rite discussed by Liú Zhīwàn 「閻山教之收魂法」 offers a classic example of such a rite, as is "Attacking the Fortress" studied by Nickerson (2007), if the problem is determined to emanate from an aggrieved soul in the underworld. Also, the rites of Sacrificing to the Stars and Presenting Cash to Supplement Fortune are also routinely performed as healing rites in this context.

[122] De Groot, *Religious System of the Chinese*, 6:1269-1282. An image of the Five Camps Heads is provided after 1278.

It may be significant that the writing of medicinal prescriptions is here ascribed not to Spirit-mediums but to the art of "wielding the divination planchette," a technique that requires a certain level of literacy, and which can, in the right hands, express considerable literary refinement, as the author here notes.[123] In fact, this more elite form spirit-writing is here spoken of in ambivalent terms; the oracles, and perhaps the medical prescriptions are said to be variably efficacious or ineffective, but amid praise for its literary form, the author finds an aura of mystery in this elite spiritism, while holding the visceral, martial, and ecstatic ritual of Spirit-mediums in undiluted contempt.

But despite these class-conscious distinctions, both commoners and more literate elites are said to be evoking spirits in order to prescribe medicines. The appropriation of medicine in temple-cults can be understood within the contexts of longstanding popular rejection of elite medicine, its prohibitive cost for much of the population, and the associations with poisoning mentioned above, associations that may have been exacerbated by quacks and rumors in the late imperial period. But for elites and semi-elites, who could more likely afford medicines, and who would have felt less social distance from medical professionals to also be prescribing medicines through spirit-writing raises important issues. First, like much of the religious culture, this practice is revealed to be shared across social boundaries, and is not limited to the lower classes. Thus while the venues, style, and ambiance of such spirit-writing sessions may have differed from temple-clubs, with their bleeding mediums and wildly charging spirit-sedans, the underlying premise of spirits

[123] The early Qīng *Yuèwéi Caǒtáng Bǐjì* 閱微草堂筆記 is filled with examples of literati composing and discussing poems authored by spirits through the divination planchette. Also see Xǔ Dìshān 許地山 《扶箕迷信的研究》(臺北市：臺灣商務，1994[民 83]).

prescribing medicines is largely the same in both realms. Moreover, the prominent involvement of spirit-writing cults in writing prescriptions raises the possibility that the practice may have begun in such elite or semi-elite circles, where knowledge of medicine intersected with spirit-writing and cultic devotion.

Numerous late Qīng and Republican-era gazetteers mention spirit-writing in this context. One such source, the 1940 *Republican [era] Yǒng-ān County Sequel Gazetteer Reprint* 民國重印永安縣續志 relates that

> In their popular customs, the common people of Mín esteem ghosts and are fond of Wū; Yǒng [Ān County] is also no exception. When people fall ill, they summon a local deity and use spirit-writing to inquire about their fortunes and to select medicines, [though such] medical treatment is ineffective. Also, when there are ghostly hauntings [...] that cannot be solved, they summon Wū of various kinds who day and night sound gongs and beat drums, jumping, leaping, and shouting with great clamor, while countless cash is spent. In this way, even when [the patient] dies they have no regrets.[124]
> 民風閩俗尚鬼好巫，永亦不免。遇病疾請土神扶乩問吉凶，採藥，醫治未效。又以為鬼祟非X不解召巫數輩日夜鳴鑼擊鼓跳躍喊鬧，費鈔無數，如是雖死不悔。

Though most Qīng and Republican sources affirm that spirit-writing and the use of spirit-possessed sedan-chairs, together with Spirit-mediums served as the principal methods of selecting medicines, this general practice would be formalized into a temple-based "Medicine Divination-slips" 藥籤 (yào qiān) genre, with sets of written prescriptions linked to numbered rods which worshippers could, with the deity's assistance (by casting divination blocks), draw for themselves.[125]

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[124] 民國 29 (1940) 重印永安縣續志, j.9 風俗 1a.

[125] On Medicine Divination-slips 藥籤 see Yán Měizhì,顏美智, Sū Yìzhāng 蘇奕彰,「臺灣廟宇藥籤之中醫文獻初探」"Preliminary Literature Review of Traditional Chinese Medicine: An Example of Prescription Divination in Taiwan Temples."中醫藥雜誌 25:特刊 2 (2014.12 [民 103.12]): 275-293.

These Medicine Divination-slips gained sufficient popularity to garner the attention of gazetteer authors. The 1947 *New Chángtài County Gazetteer* 長泰縣新志 includes this custom in a section dedicated to exposing "superstitions":

> Customs which involve superstition: inquiring about medicine. Ignorant fools seeking aid from one another, when sick they do not seek aid from medical doctors, and in their affairs they do not consider reason. They entrust all matters of life and death, calamity and blessing to spirits. Within the city walls at the South Gate, [there is] the Temple of Yuè, and outside [the walls] at the Martial Temple, at such places they all have books of Medical Divination Slips, utterly ignorant. Men and women hasten [to consult these slips] in pairs like ducks.[126]
> 俗之涉於迷信者：一，問藥。求相[?]之愚昧。病不求醫，事不酌理，生死禍福托諸神，内宮南門岳廟，外武廟等處均有相書藥籤，愚蠢駭。男女趨若鶩。

Although this author condemns the practice, only literate elites or semi-elites could have composed these Medicine Divination-slips, and presumably only those with some knowledge of the medical tradition. However, the mediums, spirit-sedans, planchette groups and authors of Medicine Divination-slips all shared the fundamental premise of consulting deities rather than doctors to prescribe medicines, and it appears many of them consulted the same deity: the deified doctor Bǎoshēng Dàdì, whose cult not only influenced this adaptation of medicine in temple religion, but also left a distinctive imprint on the Black-head Minor Rite tradition-group in Táinán and Ānpíng.

Another rich source, the 1839 *Xiàmén Gazetteer* 廈門志 also describes the practice of spirit-sedans selecting medicine. Here, the potential connection with Bǎoshēng Dàdì is further suggested by the fact that Xiàmén was administered as part of Tóng-ān County until 1912, and is home to numerous temples dedicated to Bǎoshēng Dàdì, many with ongoing connections to the god's ancestral temples in Bǎijiāo and Qīngjiāo. This source lends further support to a mid-Qīng

[126] 民國 36（1947）長泰縣新志, j. 4 地理, 風俗 , 2b.

date for the adoption of this technique, and confirms the outlines of the practice while also emphasizing the social divide between the elite-oriented medical tradition on the one hand, and the majority of society on the other, with the latter continuing to reject doctors but now seeking out their medicines through the intermediacy of spirits.

> In cases of disease, elite families invite medical doctors to examine and diagnose [the disease]; the rest [of society] does not place importance on medical doctors but instead regard spirits as important. If, before long, [the patient's] astrological fortunes deteriorate to a low point, then they say [the patient] has offended a demonic entity, and thus needs to pray, with meat offerings and spirit-money as their only means of resolving [the problem]. Then there is [the practice of] carrying a spirit and requesting medicine, an especially laughable [custom]. This involves two men who carry a spirit-sedan on their shoulders and move left and right in a wild falling and charging manner, and arriving at a pharmacy they wave the sedan's front carrying pole to point out a certain medicine, and [the pharmacy proprietors] hand it over. With the sound of a gong resonating along the road, everyone gets out of their way. When people take the medicine and die they say that the spirit was unable to save the people. Indeed these are treacherous fellows who only know a thing or two about medicine and thus contrive to carry the spirit as their occupation. Though officials have exhorted the population [to abandon this custom], in the end they are still unenlightened.
> 疾病當貴家延醫診視，餘皆不重醫而重神。不日星命衰低輒曰觸犯鬼物，牲禮楮幣祈禱維處。至擡神求藥尤為可笑。以二人肩神輿行作左右顛撲狀，至藥舖以輿扛頭遙指某藥，則與之。鳴鑼喧嚷道路，皆避。至服藥以死則曰神不能救民也。即有奸徒稍知一二藥性慣以擡神為業者。官雖勸論之，終不悟也。[127]

Here again this source emphasizes that while elites employ doctors of the classical medical tradition, "the rest of society," presumably including diverse urban classes, prefer ritual healing and assistance from the spirits. Again both more traditional, propitiatory ritual and the (evidently) more recent, Qīng-era technique of selecting medicine stand out as the principle healing methods

[127]道光 19 (1839) 廈門志 15:11b.

visible in this prosperous entrepot. Interestingly, the author here adds that the men who carry the spirit-sedan in fact possess some modicum of medical knowledge, just enough to enable them to make a living from this practice. The powerlessness of local government to discourage this practice –a standard conclusion to such observations– again echoes the consistent inability of the imperial state to directly influence local culture.

This technique of using a spirit-possessed sedan to prescribe medicines was so widespread that this same *Xiàmén Gazetteer* depicts the practice yet again in an informative chapter on local temples. After describing the universal importance of ritual processions, with particular reference to the major temple of Chí Wángye 池王爺 (Deé Ōng-yia), the Wēilíng Diàn 威靈殿, the text explains that

> Every village worships one deity, and each family worships one deity. When there are diseases, people carry a palanquin on their shoulders and go to an apothecary to get medicine, or use an inverted basket about a foot long to communicate with the deity. All such practices are without scriptural basis, and though officials have issued prohibitions, they have not stopped. If there are diseases then [people] do not hire a medical doctor but [instead] seek guidance from spirits. If they die then there are no regrets. Of Fujianese customs, this is the most ignorant of all vile practices.[128]
> 又鄉各祀一神，家各祀一神。有病則以肩輿抬之向藥肆取藥，顛箕而行神，長不過尺許，皆屬不經。雖官禁不止。病不延醫而詣神，死而無悔，亦閩俗最愚之惡習也。

This passage begins by concisely affirming the sociological centrality of the gods, noting that every village and household is united around their worship of a deity, and it is in this context of ongoing cultic veneration that ritual healing is practiced and understood. While people consistently rejected medical experts, they embraced local deities and the Wū who served them. In another passage

[128] 道光 19 (1839) 廈門志, 2:50a-b.

from the chapter on Popular Customs, this same 1839 *Xiàmén Gazetteer* gives another example of how Ritual Masters were understood to be one kind of Wū:

> In addition there is a type of Wū-xí commonly called Sāi-Gonĝ 師公 ["Master-Sires"]. They call their establishments Daoist Altars, and claim they can make blessing and deliver [people] from adversity, and thereby poison and delude people's minds. They pray, use talismans, burn paper [spirit-money] and spray [flaming] oil from their mouths, "plant flowers" and pace the dipper, their whole [ritual] inventory is bogus and absurd, without basis in (Confucian) scriptures. Foolish wives and the illiterate are sweet-talked into spending large sums [on these rites]. Families educated in the classics and proper ritual are also unable to prohibit [them].[129]
> 別有巫覡一種俗呼師公，自署曰道壇，倡為作福度厄之說，以蠱惑人心，切禱符燒紙噴油，栽花步斗，諸名目率偽妄不經。愚婦人無識所簧鼓花費尤多。書禮之家亦所不禁。

Here we encounter a common term for Ritual Masters, and in some areas for Daoist priests, "Sāi-Gonĝ" 師公,[130] who nonetheless claim to be based in "Daoist Altars," as is standard for Lűshān and other Ritual Masters in Fújiàn and elsewhere. But true to the label "Wū-xí," we can infer these Sāi-Gonĝ are probably Ritual Masters of the more Tantric-Popular domain as they are said to perform the rite of "Planting Flowers" 栽花, a classic Ritual Master liturgy, listed right after "spraying oil," likewise a staple of Red-Headed ceremony.

Though the practice of "Pacing the Dipper" mentioned here derives from classical Daoism, such techniques were at an early stage adopted into the Lűshān Ritual Master repertoire, and all forms of the Táinán Minor Rite feature a version of Pacing the Dipper in the opening stage of ritual, performed in conjunction with the consecration of the Sacred Whip and an invocation

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[129] 道光 19 (1839) 廈門志, 15:12a

[130] Sai-Gonĝ is a Mínnán term with widely-used equivalents in other southern languages. No one would ever use the Mandarin pronunciation "shī gōng", which would likely provoke misunderstanding. Such usage is thus unlike 法師 fǎ shī for Ritual Master, which people routinely pronounce in both Mínnán and Mandarin.

proclaiming this Pacing of the Seven Stars,[131] a common motif in the Minor Rite invocations.[132] Hence this is a universal practice even among the Tantric-Popular Ritual Master traditions historically labeled as "Wū."

In a now familiar refrain, this passage identifies women as major sponsors of these rituals, suggesting such women enjoyed a degree of freedom that allowed them to both pay for such rites, and mix socially. Even educated families are "unable to prohibit them," which may in fact mean that women (and/or men) of such educated families likewise formed part of the Sāi-Gonĝ's clientele.

While these Sāi-Gonĝ Ritual Masters are defined as a kind of Wū-xí, where the same section of the *Xiàmén Gazetteer* describes the activities of Daoist priests and Buddhist monks, it uses the typical phrase "Sēng-Dào" 僧道, here to criticize prevailing funerary customs:

> Funerals especially depart from proper ritual form...As to the requiem services of hired Buddhist [monks] and Daoist [priests], there are what are called "Opening the Dark Road," "Offering the Blood-pan," "Smiting the Earth Prison," "Performing the Cash-[tower?], and the Rite of Universal Salvation. These are said to eliminate the sins enrich the blessedness of the dead. Now when people die, their *qì* disperses, and there is no place their vital-essence and cloud-soul cannot go. Why, then, employ Buddhists and Daoists to open a road for them? Moreover, if people are not evil, why then would such people enter an Earth Prison [hell]? They do not treat their family members as if they were good, but treat them as if they were evil! Why such violation [of what is natural]?

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[131] As with other Opening the Altar 開壇 procedures, in Ānpíng, Pacing the Seven Stars is only performed in larger rites such as the Grand Rewarding of Troops. In all forms of the Black-Head tradition-group, though, this pacing technique is performed with the same formula (HST KT:9) which declares, "from the center of the altar, [I] walk the Polar-constellation and pace the Seven Stars" 壇中行罡步七星. In all these traditions, the actual pacing is made in tandem with the pronunciation of this formula. Red-Headed Ritual Masters in the Píngdōng/Héngchūn region practice even more extensive pacing techniques in conjunction with their rites for Spirit-soldiers of the Five Camps.

[132] E.g. HST 1: 22 黑虎將軍：天上步七星 HST 1:27 陳氏夫人: 行罡作法陳夫人, HST 1:52 連公聖者：行罡步斗到壇前；CXT 21 前壇諸大將: 步罡踏斗到壇前 (also in CXT 22 本壇大將); CXT 59 保生大帝：騰空步斗斬妖鬼； CXT 60 徐甲真人 (2) 步罡踏斗到壇前; CXT 62 張府天師： 步罡踏斗到壇前；CXT 66 木吒太子：步々行點北斗，踏七星救諸苦；CXT 121 玉皇教主: 步罡踏斗飛萬里.

> 喪葬尤多非禮 ...至於延僧道禮懺，有所謂開冥路，薦血盆，打地獄，弄鐃鈸[?]，普度諸名目云為死者滅罪資福。夫人死則氣散，其精魂無所不之也。何待僧道為之開路乎？且人非凶惡豈比人入地獄？不以善良待其親而以凶惡待其親。何其悖也?[133]

Once again, Daoist priests are not conflated with Wū, though at least two of the rites mentioned here, Smiting the Earth Prison and Offering the Blood-pan, are, in their modern Taiwanese forms, among the Red-Headed rituals of the Língbǎo Daoist priests.And though the author claims that many funerals "are in accord with the ancients," the following discussion and the author's canny theoretical objections reveal that mainstream society –especially those with money to spend– spurned the funeral customs of the Neo-Confucian program, and instead embraced a culture of Daoist, Buddhist, and Popular performance. Dramas like Mùlián and episodes from *Journey to the West*, together with other theatrical performances are singled out for their allegedly corrosive effects on social mores:

> [exorcistic] performance troupes [of "driving-out" 逐對] dressed in hideous fashion, with foul language of all manner on display, men and women assembled to watch without the slightest chaperoning or restriction, mingling with the mourning family as a group...In disordering social norms, injuring manners, and destroying customs, nothing is more serious than these [funeral practices].[134]
> 亦有逐隊扮演醜態，穢語百端呈露，男女聚觀，毫無顧忌，喪家為體...亂常傷風敗俗莫此為甚。

Yet again, the champions of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy are forced to admit that their allegedly orthodox cultural forms were not widely practiced, even among the upper classes. Like the expenses of major Daoist Jiào and the construction of temples, such ostentatious funerals show

[133] 道光 19 (1839) 廈門志 15: 6a-b. This passage continues (7a) where it criticizes the performance of dramas, including Mùlián, with actors dressed as spirits, in association with funerals.
[134] 道光 19 (1839) 廈門志 15:7a.

that the monied classes were the foremost sponsors of this decidedly un-Confucian performance culture.[135]

Across from Xiàmén lies the island of Jīnmén 金門, which likewise was formerly administered within Tóng-ān County but became an independent county 縣 in 1915, thus prompting composition of a *Jīnmén County Gazetteer* that was published in the tenth year of the Republic (1921). This rich source also reports the practice of using both spirit-writing and spirit-possessed sedans to prescribe medicines, and in detailing other customs again shows that historical sources distinguished between Wū and Daoist priests.

> There are those who put their faith in ghosts and spirits, and the benefits obtained by ritual. When ill, though they use medicine, it is by spirit-writing planchette and carrying spirit[-images in a sedan] that they ask [which] medicines [to use]. Or they hire a Wū-xí to perform ritual and [draw] talismans, and burn paper [spirit-money]. When this leads to deaths they do not realize [the error of their ways].[136]
> 或鬼神信禨祥，病雖用醫，然扶鸞擡神問藥，延巫覡禳符燒紙，至死不悟。

This same section also describes periodic Jiào and its attendant ritual processions:

> Orthodox [i.e., main] deities are carried and placed on sedans, and while the remaining deities are held in peoples' arms, and at a run [all] circumambulate the temple. A Jiào is set up and dramas performed, all very splendid. In rites named Royal Jiào there is an added degree of solemnity, and funds are collected to hire Daoists to set up [their Jiào] altar, and fashion the "Patrolling Deity" and the "Horse Groom King."[137]
> 正神端拱輦上，餘神馳擁進旋廟。設醮演劇極彫[彩?]，而王醮之名尤加敬肅，鳩金延道設壇，塑遊巡神以牧馬王。

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[135] See 15:7a for further criticism of the funeral practices of "the wealthy," particularly fēng-shuǐ theories of tombs, and the custom of "Parking the coffin," which are often mentioned in late imperial gazetteers as significant social ills.

[136] 民國 10 (1921) 金門縣志, 13:9a.

[137] 金門縣志, 13:9b.

Here we again learn that the major community temple holds both "regular" and exorcistic Royal Jiào, with the text further specifiying that the ritual experts responsible for these Jiào are Daoists. On the prior page, methods of spiritistic and ritual healing however are said to be conducted by Wū-xí, who perform ritual and draw talismans, a general description that likely points to both Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters. The "Patrolling Spirit" 遊巡神 sounds very much like the Epidemic King, aka. Sire of a Thousand Years 千歲爺 who plays a leading role in Royal Jiào on Táiwān, and is specially summoned into a spirit-tablet and then carried in grand procession among participating villages.

Another Republican-era text, the 1916 *Lóngyán County Gazetteer* 龍巖縣志 gives further testimony of these practices, and voices many of the same anxieties noted in other 19th and early 20th C. texts of its kind, complete with the vocabulary and outlook of westernizing modernization:

> Southerners are fond of ghosts, and have been this way since antiquity. A stone may be called "Duke," and a tree may be capable of spiritual influence. They may fashion an earthen image of a yámen runner and call him "grandpa." When diseases break out they cavalierly wave off the doctor's clinic and [instead] beseech the spirit of a wooden idol. With Daoist Jiào and Buddhist scriptures, mediums [or, spirit-writing 乩] prescribing spiritual medicines, sons believe this to be filial...Then there are wives who suspect ghosts and spirits, and believe those who store up witchcraft-poison can with a snap of their fingers kill a man, and with a glance can transmit poison. When boys and girls occasionally catch cold, if people recklessly administer medicines [or, laxatives], they often die by mistake. Nowadays superstition is being gradually eliminated. Civilization has an image; the worship of idols and the theories of the prognosticators, the damage of Wū-poisoning, day by day [all these superstitions] are being eliminated.
> 南人好鬼振古如茲；石或程公，樹或能靈，泥塑皂隸，更呼爺爺。疾病掉臂醫門，乞靈木偶。道醮佛經，乩方神藥，子以此為孝。...乃婦人疑鬼疑神，為蓄蠱之人彈指即可殺人，側目亦能施毒。子女風寒偶中，泄藥妄投

，往往誤死。今則迷信漸除。文明有象，偶像之拜，形家之言。巫蠱之禍，日見消滅矣。[138]

Like many of his era, this author champions the westernizing narrative pitting "superstition" against "civilization," a vision of progress and anti-traditionalism which had, since the late 19th C. been gaining traction among coastal elites. Again we are told that people generally rejected the established medical profession, and instead consulted spirits to obtain pharmaceutical prescriptions. The medicine –still potentially fatal– has come to be valued despite its proven dangers, but as we can infer from all of these sources, the medical professionals of Qīng and Republican eras were still mistrusted even where their potentially dangerous medicines had become highly sought-after. Instead, tremendous faith was placed in the immanent deities at the focal point of local culture, gods who manifested through mediums and spirit-writing, and as intense persona within the realm of lived experience enjoyed profound social solidarity with people of diverse class and gender backgrounds.

On the broader religious culture, this passage again confirms that like the greater Fújiàn region, if not most of southern China, the temple cults and Spirit-mediums of local society were integrated with Daoist Jiào and Buddhist-style scripture recitation. We know from fieldwork in Lóngyán that such Jiào were most likely performed by well-documented Lűshān altars, whose hybrid liturgical systems include the high gods of classical Daoism, and thus establish a Lűhsān-style Daoist ritual cosmos encompassing the temple-cults of local society.

[138] 民國 5（1916） 龍巖縣志 卷 21 禮俗志, 14a-b.

One last source, this time from late Qīng Táiwān, summarizes many of the themes encountered here thus far. The 1893 *New Xīnzhú Gazetteer, First Draft*[139] again exemplifies how gazetteers increasingly include far more extensive and detailed depictions of local customs from the late nineteenth century onward. Among the details revealed is further testimony of how popular sentiment was deeply resistant to the Neo-Confucian funeral program:

> Those mourning a death hire a Buddhist or Daoist to recite scriptures and offer a repentance ceremony [for the deceased's sins], and thus seek the deliverance and ascendance of their departed father and mother. Everyone practices this as custom. If, among [the community] there are those who hold to the Way [of 'orthodox' Neo-Confucianism] and do not do these [Buddhist and Daoist rites of deliverance 超度], [140] then the community will charge them with the crime of being unfilial. Moreover, [the local people] revere ghosts and esteem Wū, and when they encounter illness people pray and use ritual to avert disaster, and call this "Presenting Cash to Supplement Fortune," with the resounding clamor of metal [gongs] and drums, day and night without pause. There are those who act as Spirit-mediums [乩童], with loosened hair and arms bared, holding a sword in their hand they cut their foreheads and pierce their skin to show the spirit's power, and recklessly reveal [prescriptions for] medicine. And then there are those who use the divination planchette to write characters. They say the spirit descends and then reveals prescriptions for medicine; moreover, it can also compose poems and essays. These things are remarkably efficacious and uncanny, there's no way to fathom it. As to the vegetarian [sects], they build many vegetarian halls, where morning and night they recite scriptures and bow to the Buddha in order to seek positive karmic results. Then there are the Āng-yí [141]["Puppet-Aunties"] who take on the name of some female Buddha, and on behalf of clients inquire with ghosts and investigate spirits. They can even fetch the souls of remote ancestors so that it takes possession of the Āng-yí and speaks. Mostly they are all just taking advantage of the situation for their own profit. Wives especially place intense faith in [these Āng-yí], their hearts so stubbornly fixed there is no way to break [the their trust in these mediums]. This is probably the remnant custom of southern barbarian tribes.

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[139] 光緒 19 （1893, 2011）新竹縣志初稿.

[140] And thus insist on Zhū Xī's Neo-Confucian funeral and Family Ritual 家禮 program.

[141] The text here uses the homophonous 紅姨 to represent what is normally written 尪姨.

> 居喪者，延請僧道誦經拜懺，求為考妣超升，相習為風。間有守道不為者，群罪以不孝。而又信鬼尚巫，遇病群相禱禳，曰進錢補運，金鼓喧勝，晝夜不息。有為乩童者，披髮露臂,手持刀劍剖額，刺膚以示神靈，妄示方藥。又有扶乩出字，謂神下降，指示方藥，並能作詩作文，事尤靈怪，不可探知。至於吃齋者多建菜堂，朝夕誦經禮佛以求善果。有紅姨焉，托名女佛，為人問鬼探神，雖遠代祖先，能勾其魂附紅姨以傳言。大抵皆乘便取利，婦女尤為酷信，其心牢不可破。蓋蠻貊之風猶存焉。[142]

Once again, a member of the scholar-gentry observes that the Neo-Confucian ritual program advocated by ideologically orthodox elites was not generally accepted. In fact, according to general custom, people regarded the performance of Buddhist and Daoist funerary rites as an expression of filial duty to their deceased parents, and to omit them would constitute a serious offense. After more than five centuries of promotion, and despite the prestige lent by office-holding elites and associations with imperial sanction, Zhū Xī's family rituals had failed to gain much traction in society.

Here the classic phrase, "revere ghosts and esteem Wū" is illustrated by an example which confirms the Wū in question are Ritual Masters, as the healing rite specified is none other than the "Presenting Cash to Supplement Fortune" ritual, a mainstay of the Ritual Master repertoire, and the principal, all-purpose healing and fortune-boosting rite of the modern Táinán tradition, where Spirit-mediums often participate at critical stages. Again this text distinguishes between Wū, who are associated with the Supplementing Fortune rite, and Daoist priests, who are here cited as performing funerals, as denoted in the compound "Buddhists monks and Daoist priests" 僧道 (sēng-dào).

[142] 光緒 19 新竹縣志初稿 , 卷 5, 上風俗, 231.

Moreover, this passage appears to distinguish between Wū as Ritual Masters, and Spirit-mediums, who are again indicated by the more modern, colloquial, and specific term "divining youth" 乩童 (jītǒng).[143] True to the ancient iconography of the Wū, these Spirit-mediums are described with classic streaming hair, even if with bare arms rather than bare feet. Together with a vivid image of the self-mortification for which Mínnán Spirit-mediums are well known, these mediums –or the gods who incarnate through them– are said to have been prescribing medicines, as are the spirits channeled through the divination planchette. Revealingly, like the *Tóng-ān County Gazetteer* passage on the planchette, the author of this *New Xīnzhú Gazetteer* entry is rather sympathetic to this more elite form of spiritistic communication, and finds the writings of these more literate spirits to be efficacious, genuine, and of a certain literary merit.

These patterns of sympathy remind us that even where late imperial authors condemned aspects of religious culture, such rhetoric tends to follow the contours of status, class, and style, and in most cases hardly represents a "rational" rejection of the religious culture itself, even when voiced by champions of Chéng-Zhū Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. The fundamental premises and forms of the Common Religion were universal to every class and status group in traditional China, and where real differences arose, they tended to be stylistic and theoretical rather than absolute. While the scholar-officials who wrote gazetteers often condemn specific practices in chapters on Popular Customs, in sections on temples, even obscure local cults bereft of official recognition are often said to be efficacious.[144] Hence these authors express discomfort and disapproval toward the

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[143] This common, modern term "divining youth" 乩童 jītǒng may be of late usage, or a kind of vernacular, or both. No instance of the term 'jītǒng" appears in the Scripta Sinica database, though of course other, older terms, as well as other uses of the term 乩 jī are extremely numerous. In Mínnán/Taiwanese the equivalent term is always 童乩 đang-geê, though an old-fashioned term 金 g̃eem Gyāh (golden boy) is sometimes still used.

[144] Examples can be found in most gazetteers that list Popular temples or describe deified figures in "Fāng-wài" 方外 ("Mystics") chapters; for example 1871 福建通志 j. 263 39b, 45a, 56b. While in Popular Customs 風俗

violent power of more martial and Popular practices, while voicing admiration and even wonder toward spiritist phenomena that embodied the values and techniques of their own literary culture.

Such factors of social distance may have played a role in the evolution of spiritistic medicine explored in this chapter. Sources testify that during the late imperial period, the common people consistently rejected and in many cases actively feared the medicines of the established medical tradition, until, that is, the control and prescription of these medicines passed from the hands of elite medical doctors and into the spirit-sedans, planchettes, and Spirit-mediums of local cults. Despite their exaltation as powerful and potentially dangerous divinities, the gods that people worshiped in their homes, encountered in their neighborhood shrines, and welcomed on the streets in their major festivals represented familiar spiritual persona who were, for many, less aloof and antagonistic than the predatory elites and ruthless merchants who dominated much of local society. In matters of life, death, and medical care, it appears that people consistently trusted these gods, their Spirit-mediums, and Ritual Masters more than the educated human representatives of the medical profession.

In the highly commercialized world of late imperial China, the medicines selected by spirit-possessed sedan chairs and the like could not have been free. Thus, as people still rejected the medical establishment but now availed themselves of formerly feared –and still deadly medicines, the issue was not simply the cost factor, as people were still buying these medicines after the spirit-sedan had indicated the proper prescription. Thus it seems likely that among common

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sections of gazetteers, certain religious practices and customs are routinely derided as wasteful or ineffective, but in sections on temples or Fāng-wài biographies, where the text describes established cults, while occasionally certain editors might comment that certain gods are "without textual basis" 無可考 etc., I have yet to read an entry in these sections which openly mocks such temple-cults, or claims they are utterly without spiritual power. Rather, language attesting to their efficaciousness is so common as to form a stock motif.

people of diverse means, while medicines became desirable, medical professionals were still spurned. This suggests that among wide segments of the population, the perception of elite and semi-elite medical doctors was not positive. Such popular perceptions may have been colored by rumors, association with quacks, or by the tensions of social distance. Whatever the case, the fact that medicines themselves came to be seen as efficacious and desirable appears to indicate a shift in the culture, perhaps prompted in part by intensified commercialization, whereby these commodities acquired greater allure.

Moreover, numerous sources cited here mention more elite-oriented spirit-writing cults also summoning spirits to write prescriptions through the planchette. The literate participants of such groups would not have faced the same economic or social disincentives against patronizing doctors of the classical medical tradition that may have dissuaded many other late imperial Chinese from seeking medical treatment from an elite oriented profession. And given that literate elites with some knowledge of medicine must have composed the Medicine Divination-slips genre, the involvement of elites in this overall phenomenon presents a number of interesting problems. Were such elites likewise suspicious of medical doctors, or just more trusting of spirits? Or did they see no conflict between the two, with doctors and spirits complimentary sources of medical expertise?

Other kinds of sources might shed light on these questions, including an extended investigation of the "Skilled Technicians" 方技 sections of the local gazetteer genre, which cannot be attempted here. But based on the gazetteers sections on Popular Customs and temple-culture examined in this study, we can see that there were multiple elite positions regarding religion, medicine, and ritual, and that the much-ballyhooed "orthodoxy" of Confucian literati was, even among the elite, a minority position rarely realized in practice. For the evidence shows that

consulting spirits, like hiring Buddhist and Daoists for funerals, was a common, even mainstream practice among elites, and though separated by stylistic and social differences, elites and commoners came to share this general methodology of summoning spirits to prescribe medicines. As both spirit-writing and the medical profession were aspects of literate culture, it seems possible that the practice originated among such spirit-writing circles, where contact with and knowledge of medicines were more established, and from there spread to more popular contexts.

As I have found no sources prior to the 1762 *Hǎichéng County Gazetter* that mention this practice,[145] it seems possible that this adaptation developed during the prosperous mid-Qīng, but it could well have been earlier (the late Míng would seem to have favored such a merger of ritual and commerce), and only began appearing in these increasingly detailed Qīng-era sources. According to the evidence examined here, however, pharmaceuticals of the classical medical tradition only gained wider use among the general populace around the middle of the 18th C, when they came to be administered by the gods whom people trusted and revered, gods made manifest by the Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters labeled as Wū.

Qīng Táiwān and the Hakka Master

Qīng-era gazetteers for the new frontier territory of Táiwān offer a remarkable wealth of information about the religious culture, and though like the gazetteer genre as a whole, such information grows in scope and detail during the late 19th C., relatively early Taiwanese gazetteers also report on a range of important practices, from periodic Royal Jiào to the activities of Wū in general, and Ritual Masters in particular. The earliest record of Ritual Masters on Táiwān appears

[145] The Qiánlóng 28 (1768) *Quánzhōu Prefecture Gazetteer* cited above also references this practice. Together, these two sources constitute the earliest explicit records of such practices that I am aware of.

in the 1717 *Zhūluó County Gazetteer* 諸羅縣志,[146] and initiates a new trope in Taiwanese gazetteer ethnography, the "Hakka Master" 客仔師(ke̍ih-â-sai).

> [The people] esteem Wū, and in cases of illness they order one to ritually treat it. And then there are those who are neither Buddhist monastics nor Daoists, called "Hakka Masters." They carry a scoop of rice and use it to divine the [illness of the] patient. This [technique] is called the "Rice Trigram," and [they use it] to explain the [doings of] ghosts and spirits. The villagers are somewhat deluded by them, and hire them to post talismans, perform ritual, and pray to the spirits. With drums and horns resounding to the sky, they continue the whole night before ceasing. Though the illness has not been cured, they have paid three or five [taels of silver]. [These Hakka Masters] not only delude people with perverse theories, they are a hole down which people waste their money.
> 尚巫，疾病輒令禳之。又有非僧非道，名客仔師；攜一撮米，往占病者，謂之米卦，稱說鬼神。鄉人為其所惑，倩貼符行法而禱於神；鼓角喧天，竟夜而罷。病為未瘥，費已三、五金矣。不特邪說惑人，亦糜財之一竇也。[147]

This relatively early Taiwanese gazetteer introduces the figure of the Hakka Master in the general context of the Wū, but framed by an observation that gets to the crux of the Ritual Master phenomenon: these Hakka Masters are neither Buddhists nor exactly Daoists, nor are they Spirit-mediums. As with the appearance of more colloquial terms for Spirit-medium in the literature, many authors seem to have found the ambiguous literary term Wū increasingly inadequate, and adopted more specific terminology from oral culture.

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[146] Zhūluó County 諸羅縣 was a Qīng administrative unit that from 1684 to 1723 included all of coastal Táiwān from the Zēngwén River north of Táinán City to the northern tip of the island. At the time, Qīng Táiwān was administered under three counties: Táiwān County, incorporating most of Táinán county, and to the south Fēngshān County 鳳山縣, covering modern Gāoxíong and Píngdōng counties. In 1723 the original Zhūluó County was divided in three, with the northernmost region reorganized as Dànshuǐ Subprefecture 淡水廳, while the central territory became Zhānghuà County. The remaining area of Zhūluó County was renamed Jiāyì County 嘉義縣 in 1787 following suppression of the Lín Shuǎngwén 林爽文 rebellion.

[147] 諸羅縣志 (1717 [2005]), 8:231.

The method described here of using a scoop of rice –usually wrapped in a small piece of red cloth– is still quite common among many more rural Ritual Masters, particularly as a kind of ritual implement used in "Gathering-in Shock" 收驚, where the rice itself absorbs the malefic energies afflicting the patient, while the bundle or cloth-covered bowl is sometimes then opened and read to determine such factors as the general compass-direction where the patient was subjected to demonic attack, or where a lost soul may have lodged.

Of the numerous texts to reproduce this passage from the *Zhūluó County Gazeteer*,[148] the 1852 *Kavalan Department Gazetteer* 噶瑪蘭廳志, in describing customs of northeastern Táiwān (roughly the Yílán region) adds further observations:

> The common people esteem Wū, and in cases of illness they employ [Wū] to ritually alleviate their disease. Then there are [priests] who are neither Buddhist nor Daoist, and as most are Hakka from Guǎngdōng [Yuè], they are called "Hakka Masters." Because they bind their heads with a red cloth, they are also called "Red-Headed Masters" 紅頭師. At the gates of their residences each posts the title of their altar, and in truth are of a kind with the Daoists.[149]
> 俗尚巫，疾病輒令禳之。又有非僧非道者，以其出於粵客，名「客子師」，以其頭纏紅布，又名「紅頭師」；所居門各標壇號，實則道家者流也。

Here we learn that the Hakka Masters are indeed "Red-Headed" Ritual Masters, and by this description this text may well be one of if not the first textual record specifically mentioning Red-Headed Ritual Masters since Jīn Yūnzhōng's 12th C. remarks in his *Shàngqīng Língbǎo Dàfǎ* quoted earlier in this chapter. Revealingly, however, despite the now-standard phrase "neither Buddhist nor Daoist," the author concludes that they should in fact be considered "of a kind with the Daoists."[150]

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[148] For example, 乾隆 6 (1741)《重修福建臺灣府志》j.12 風土志 p.537; 乾隆12 （1747）《重修臺灣府志》, 401;《雲林縣采訪冊》, j.1, 29.

[149] 咸豐2（1852）《噶瑪蘭廳志》, 卷5 風俗 上, 272.

[150] Also noteworthy is the author's use of the term "Dào Jiā" 道家 to label Daoist priests, which is representative of all historical texts from the medieval period to the early 20th C, in which the terms Dào Jiā and Dào Jiào are interchangeable and refer to the religious traditions arising from Zhāng Dàolíng. The notion that the term "Dào

Among the earliest of several 19th C. Taiwanese gazetteers to elaborate upon this trope is the 1836 *Zhānghuà County Gazetteer* 彰化縣誌. In line with standard practice in the genre, the original passage from the *Zhūluó County Gazetteer* has been adopted largely verbatim, and while the term "Hakka Master" has curiously been dropped, the author expands the earlier text to include many other concrete and credible details.

> The common people by nature esteem Wū, and whenever disease [strikes] they have a Buddhist or Daoist perform ritual to cure it, called Presenting Cash to Supplement Fortune. Then there is [a kind of priest] neither Buddhist nor Daoist who wraps their head in a red cloth called a Red-Headed Master, and many people from Cháo[zhōu] perform as such priests. They take a pinch of rice and use it to divine illnesses, called Divining by Rice Trigrams. Making claims about spirits and talking of ghosts, the villagers are deluded by them. They post talismans, perform ritual, and pray to spirits, with the clamor of the drum and horn resounding to heaven, lasting all through the night until ceasing. While the illness has not been cured, the fees are already several tens of gold. They not only delude people with perverse theories, they are but a hole into which people waste their wealth. Then there are those who search out the spirits, some male some female, who go to people's homes and set up [an altar with] incense, candles and spirit-money. Then they cover their heads with a red scarf so that it covers their face, and after a short while they start speaking ghost-talk, as if the soul of the deceased has come, attached itself to their body and begun speaking. At last they will have performed like this many tens of times, with their fees totaling several hundreds of cash. Wives especially trust and sponsor these mediums. This custom must be strictly forbidden and made to stop.[151]
>
> 俗素尚巫，凡疾病輒令僧道禳之，曰進錢補運。又有非僧非道以紅布包頭，名紅頭司，多潮人為之，攜一撮米，往占病者，名占米卦。稱神說鬼，鄉人為其所愚，倩貼符行法而禱於神，鼓角喧天，竟夜而罷，病未愈而費已十數金矣。不特邪說惑人，亦縻財之一竇也。又有尋

Jiā" is meant to distinguish Hàn and Warring States texts like the Lǎozi and Zhuāngzi from so-called religious Daoism is an anachronistic invention of the modern period, and is without historical basis.

[151] 1836《彰化縣志》（台北市：文建會，2006），441.

> 神者，或男或女不等，到家排香燭金楮，其人以紅帕覆首掩面，少頃即作鬼語，若亡魂來附其身而言者。竟日十數次，費數百錢，婦女尤信而好之，此風不可不嚴禁使止也。

While the effects of inflation, rhetorical or economic, have evidently increased the fees involved, this source is also among the earliest to specifically describe a Ritual Master as a "Red-Headed" Master. Also, the rite of Presenting Cash to Supplement Fortune is mentioned as a healing ritual, and if indeed performed by Daoists (as is routine in Táinán county), or more remarkably, by Buddhists, this would indicate that by the early 19th C (if not earlier), Daoist priests had adopted purely Red-Headed Ritual Master ceremony into their repertoire. The fact that the term "Hakka Master" has been omitted is all the more notable for the added detail that these Red-Headed Masters are primarily the descendants of Cháozhōu immigrants, most of whom would have been Hakka-speakers. This may reflect local nomenclature, where the term "Hakka Master" was simply not used. The Spirit-mediums described are again the Āng-yí type who specialize in channeling deceased ancestors, and operate not in temples of the gods but in people's homes. That the author expresses particular anxiety over wives patronizing these mediums, and calls for their strict prohibition would suggest that the wives in question were those of elite families like the author's own.

The 1871 *Dànshuǐ Subprefecture Gazetteer* 淡水廳志 offers yet another redaction of these passages, with certain additions that confirm these practices and ritual performers were ubiquitous throughout Qīng-administered Táiwān.

> [People] believe in ghosts and esteem Wū, [from this we can see that] the customs of the [southern barbarian] Mán-Mò peoples still exists. There are so-called "Vegetarian Halls," where people eat a vegetarian diet and worship the Buddha, with men and women living mixed together. Then there are "Hakka Masters"; when someone falls ill they perform ritual and offer prayers, called "[Presenting]

> Cash to Supplement Fortune," with an overwhelming clamor of gongs and drums, day and night unceasing. There are those who act as "Divining Youths" 乩童, who carry a spirit-sedan and leap about and through absurd pretense reveal medicinal prescriptions. Their hands holding sabers and swords, with loosened hair streaming they slice their foreheads in order to reveal their spiritual power. There are women who perform as "Puppet Aunties" 尪姨 [Āng-yí] who claim to act in the name of a female Buddha, and investigate people's hidden matters. Such kinds all take advantage of people for their own benefit. Those who put faith in these [mediums] are so stubbornly fixed that [their faith] cannot be broken.[152]
>
> 又信鬼尚巫，蠻貊之習猶存。有曰「菜堂」，吃齋拜佛，男女雜居。又有客師，遇病禳禱，曰「金[進]錢補運」，金鼓喧勝，晝夜不已。有為乩童，扶輦跳躍，妄示方藥，手執刀劍，披髮剖額，以示神靈。有為尪姨，託名女佛，探人隱事，類皆乘間取利，信之者牢不可破。

Beyond the now-familiar Hakka Masters and the still-common rite of Presenting Cash to Supplement Fortune, this text also notes the presence of Sectarian Vegetarian Halls (usually called Zhāitáng 齋堂), and offers the usual criticism of such "Vegetarian Sects" 齋教 for their characteristic mixing of the genders, a product of strong participation by women in these literate, scripture-oriented religious groups. This Dànshuǐ gazetteer also confirms that Spirit-mediums and spirit-possessed sedan chairs were prescribing medicines in the same manner as reported across southern Fújiàn, while the ubiquitous "Puppet Aunties" are likewise mentioned here by name. Though the term Wū still appears in the traditional opening line, more specific, colloquial terms for Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters are increasingly displacing the ambiguous classical terminology of Wū in 19th C gazetteers.

As older material was continuously repackaged into newer compilations, depictions of the religious culture tended to accumulate, where authors then supplemented these received accounts

[152] 淡水廳志，j.11 風俗考, 399.

with new material. An informative example of this trend is given in an unofficial travelogue, *Dōngyíng Shìlüè* 東瀛識略 (*Concise Knowledge of the Eastern Sea*), written by Jiāngsū native Dīng Shàoyí 丁紹儀 around 1849, but not published until 1873. In an overview of religious customs, Dīng combined records of the exorcistic Royal Jiào 王醮 from the 1720 *Táiwān County Gazetteer*[153] with other, widely reproduced passages and, evidently, his own observations. Notable are descriptions of temple celebrations and the Rite of Universal Salvation (Pǔdù 普度), which together illustrate the collective sponsorship of temple precinct rites, and the intensive participation of government officials in community rites of the Common Religion.

> Southerners esteem ghosts, and Táiwān especially so. In cases of disease they put no trust in medicine, but instead trust Wū. There is [a kind of priest] neither Buddhist nor Daoist who exclusively performs rites to avert disaster called a Hakka Master. They carry a scoop of rice and use it for divination, [a practice] called Rice Trigrams. They write talismans, perform ritual, and pray to the spirits, with the clamor of the drum and horn rising to Heaven, lasting all through the night before ceasing. And though the disease is not cured, the people believe them all the more. Whenever a temple celebrates the birthday of their deities, the entire precinct contributes money for theatrical performances as part of the celebration. A number of people manage the affair, called Head Households 頭家. The most important of these events are [the rite of] Putting-out to Sea in the Fifth Month, and the Rite of Universal Salvation in the Seventh Month. The Putting-out to Sea is meant to expel plague, and is what the ancients called the Núo. People pool resources to build a wooden boat, and use five-colored-paper to make three images of the Plague Kings. Then they hire Daoist priests to perform a Jiào of either two or three days and nights, and on the final day of the Jiào, there is a magnificent display of sacrificial offerings and theatrical performances called Inviting the King. When finished, they carry the Plague Kings onto the boat, together with a hundred kinds of foodstuffs, implements and tools, valuables and money, nothing is left out, and with drums, clarinets and a ceremonial armed guard, the boat is put out to sea, where it follows the current where it pleases. If it comes to rest upon a shore somewhere, then the village of that place experiences many violent hauntings, and

[153] 康熙 59 （1720）臺灣縣志，j.1. See note below for this early passage.

must again ritually drive it away. The expenses for each Jiào are many hundreds of [taels]. Some are conducted at intervals of once a year, or every two years.[154] Every prefecture 郡 of Fúzhōu also practices [this rite of] Putting out to Sea, [where] the boat and each of its material objects are all made of paper, and are merely images; thus like the Rite of Universal Salvation [their Putting-out to Sea] cannot compare with that of Táiwān. The Rite of Universal Salvation is the offering of sacrifice to the unworshipped orphan souls of the dead, what the Buddhists call the Yúlán[pěn] Assembly. [Performance of these rites] begins with the first of the Seventh Month, and continue to the end of the month when they cease. Some are performed by one household or several households, or one village. They hire Buddhists and Daoists 僧道 to recite scriptures and distribute [sacrificial] food [to the spirits of the dead]; they set up sacrificial offerings, flowers, and buns, and offer them in ritual, burning spirit-money and paper items in the streets. Poor households must also buy cups of wine, pieces of meat, and some spirit-money, perform sacrifice and burn the paper items. The most splendid [rites] are offered by the Yámen offices of townships, administrative routes 道, prefectures, subprefectures, and counties, where they present offerings to spirit-tablets in the great hall, hang embroidered tapestries and strands of lanterns, display paintings, diagrams, and artistic heirlooms. With incense and the scent of flowers filling the air, they set up a fence to hold back the onlookers, while the two covered walkways are used by the Buddhists and Daoists to set up their Offering altars 醮壇. By day they recite scriptures, and by night they perform [the rite of] the Flaming Mouths [to feed the hungry ghosts], and light the Water Lanterns. [These] lanterns number in the thousands, and amid a clamor of gongs and drums are sent floating on the water. [Some lanterns] have coins placed in them; if fishermen get them, they say the whole year will be smooth and beneficial. The Offering [Jiào 醮] lasts two or three days, and when it is about to end, three huge tables are set up end-to-end in the hall, with arrays of wine and food offerings, while underneath straw mats are spread out, with opium paste 阿芙蓉膏 and the necessary paraphernalia of pipes and lamps, saying the spirits of the dead will be pleased here, with no enjoyment left out. In addition there are numerous tables piled with pigs, fish, chickens, ducks, fresh fruit and cakes, stacked up five or six feet high into a mound as a marvelous sight. In front of the screening-wall [before the main gate] a theatrical stage is set up. Also boys and girls are chosen for their beauty and adorned as [characters from] classic tales, [in a practice] called "Platform

[154] The original text of the 1720 *Taiwan County Gazetteer*, from which this has been paraphrased (perhaps via the 1749 *Revised Táiwān County Gazetteer*), offers the more reliable observation that Royal Jiào were held once every three years.

Pavilions" [or Artistic Pavilions 藝閣]. [There are] a number of these pavilion-frames, often ten or more, with four men carrying each frame, and led by drums and clarinets they make a circuit of the streets and market; reaching the government office they stop, where the official presents a silver medallion. Every year the necessary expenses [run as high as] a thousand Mexican silver dollars, or if less then still several hundred, all of which is collected within the government office. As the chickens and fish are all offered live [or, raw][155], after several days there is a great stench, and unavoidably this leads to an obscene wastefulness. Everyone says that even though meat and fish easily spoil, after offering them in sacrifice, though the offerings still preserve their shapes intact, they are all without any flavor.

南人尚鬼，臺灣尤甚。病不信醫，而信巫。有非僧非道專事祈禳者曰客師，攜一撮米往占曰米卦；書符行法而禱於神，鼓角喧天，竟夜而罷。病即不愈，信之彌篤。凡寺廟神佛生辰，合境斂金演戲以慶，數人主其事，名曰頭家。最重者，五月出海，七月普度。出海者，義取逐疫，古所謂儺。鳩貲造木舟，以五彩紙為瘟王像三座，延道士禮醮二日夜或三日夜，醮盡日，盛設牲醴演戲，名曰請王；既畢，舁瘟王舟中，凡百食物、器用、財寶，無不備，鼓吹儀仗，送船入水，順流以去則喜。或泊於岸，則其鄉多厲，必更禳之。每醮費數百金。亦有閒一、二年始舉者。福州諸郡亦興出海，船與各物皆紙為之，象形而;即普度亦弗如台。普度者，祭無祀孤魂，僧家所謂盂蘭會也。自七月初起，至月盡止，或一家數家、或一村，延僧道誦經施食，設牲醴花果包面以祭，焚紙帛於衢；貧家亦必市杯酒、塊肉、紙錢少許，祭而焚之。其盛則以鎮、道、府、廳、縣衙署為最，大堂供神位，結綵張燈，羅陳圖畫、骨董、香花務滿，設欄以限觀者，兩廊為僧道醮壇。日則唪經，夜放焰口，燃水燈。燈以千百計，鑼鼓喧闐，送浮水面，有置錢於中者；漁人得之，謂一年順利。醮二日或三日。將畢，庭聯巨案三，陳列酒饌，下鋪草席，置阿芙蓉膏及所需鎗斗燈簽之屬，謂鬼之所好在此，不具不受享；別具多桌，壘豬、魚、雞、鴨、鮮果、餅餌高五、六尺，積如岡阜為美。照壁前，搭臺演劇。又有擇童男女之美秀者，飾為故事，名曰臺閣；數架、十餘架無定，每架四人舁之，先以鼓吹，遍歷街市，及署而止，官乃賚以銀牌。每年需費番銀千圓，少亦數百圓，胥斂之署以內。其雞魚皆生獻，越宿已臭，未免暴殄。僉曰不但葷腥易敗，祭後諸品雖存形質，食之均無味云。

[155] Usually, meat offerings are "scalded"湯過的 so that they are not so susceptible to spoilage.

Many of these observations still generally hold true for the modern religious system, from the institution of the "Head Household" (now usually a series of deputies to the Master of the Incense Burner 爐主), to the notion that ghosts and spirits consume the essences of food offerings, thus perceptibly altering their flavor. But Dīng Shàoyí's judgement that Taiwanese rites surpassed in grandeur those of the provincial capital (and newly opened treaty port) of Fúzhōu is rather remarkable. If more reflective of facts than the observer's optics, the greater expense and emphasis lavished on these community rites would at a minimum testify to Taiwanese economic prosperity at the time, and possibly an intensification of religious piety in a diasporic setting. However, as the original *Táiwān Country Gazetteer* mentions that wooden Royal Boats had given way to cheaper bamboo and paper ones in the early 18th C, Dīng's contrast with Fúzhōu may have been somewhat idealized, and may also reflect his own greater apprehension of, or curiosity toward community ritual during his brief Taiwanese sojourn.

As the author of an unofficial record and travelogue, as opposed to an officially-sponsored gazetteer, Dīng may have felt at greater liberty to detail the central role of government offices in sponsoring rites officiated by Buddhists and Daoists, a situation which likely prevailed in imperial society despite the ultra-orthodox posturing of Neo-Confucian puritans, whose prescriptive rhetoric has for far too long been misread as descriptive of fact. The practice of granting Buddhists and Daoists space within government offices to set up altars and perform the Rite of Universal Salvation was surely not an unprecedented invention of frontier officials, but rather more likely reflected longstanding and widespread practice. While major prayers for rain, a particular specialty of late imperial Daoists, routinely featured official sponsorship and participation (see below), De Groot likewise reports the elicitation of official participation in rites for the expulsion of plague,

rites which involved major ritual processions complete with self-mortifying Spirit-mediums, Ritual Masters, and Minor Rite troupes.[156] Thus we should not be surprised to find that Daoists and Buddhists erected altars within government offices, nor think it unusual for officials to have prominently participated in major community rites of the Common Religion.

For the figure of the Hakka Master to have gained such notice and become something of a fixture in Qīng-era Taiwanese gazetteers may reflect contingencies of immigration and observation more than the social predominance of Hakka-speaking Ritual Masters in Qīng Táiwān per se. Professor Lǐ Fēngmào (1993) has written an article discussing the phenomenon of the Hakka Master which primarily examines patterns of immigration, labor, landholding and other social aspects of early Táiwān to show that the term Hakka Master was likely coined and used by non-Hakka, Mínnán-speaking communities. In addition, Professor Lǐ points out that Hakka immigrants were primarily concentrated into certain regions of central and northern Táiwān, i.e. the territory administered under the early Zhūluó County, whose 1717 gazetteer first introduced the enduring language depicting the "neither Buddhist nor Daoist" Hakka Master.

Though clearly a much-plagiarized passage, subtle differences in detail, like the inclusion of the "Red-Head" label in some sources indicate that authors in different times and places became aware of such factors independently of older gazetteer narratives. Thus while the label of "Red-Headed Master" may well indicate Ritual Masters not necessarily of Hakka descent, this century and a half of Qīng-era sources suggests that Hakka Masters and Red-Headed Masters were not merely a literary trope, but an actual social phenomenon visible across Qīng administered Táiwān.

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[156] See De Groot, *Religious System of China*, 6:981-990, esp. 986-7.

Epilogue: the *Táiwān County Gazetteer and Zhūluó County Gazetteer* on the Royal Jiao

In this survey of gazetteer and related anecdotal literature, I have presented numerous passages which illustrate how late imperial authors usually distinguish Wū from Daoist priests, a distinction which Daoists themselves have always emphatically maintained. Even where Wū are depicted as performing Jiào or the Rite of Universal Salvation (in the Qíanlóng *Fúzhōu Prefecture Gazetteer*, and *Five Assorted Offerings*), in other sections of these texts, Daoist priests are called "Dàoshì" 道士 or are glossed in the compound "Buddhists and Daoists" 僧道. Hence in these and other historic texts, there is no generalized conflation between Wū and Daoists, nor is the term Wū applied to Daoists, except perhaps with some "Ŝai-Gonĝ" 師公 type priests, who often amount to Ritual Masters with Daoist-style vestments. Typically, Daoists who perform Jiào are not described as Ŝai-Gonĝ. Thus given extensive fieldwork data, including voluminous compendia of liturgical texts detailing the Jiào and mortuary ritual performed by Lűshān Ritual Masters in northern and western Fújiàn, in these and similar cases I believe we are justified in interpreting these references to Wū as more likely indicating the activities of Ritual Masters.

The only passage in Fujianese and Taiwanese gazetteers I have found where Daoist priests appear to be labeled as Wū appears in the same 1717 *Zhūluó County Gazetteer* that introduces the figure of the Hakka Master, this time in an interesting depiction of the Royal Jiào in early Qīng Táiwān. Revealingly however, this passage is paraphrased and supplemented in the 1720 *Táiwān County Gazetteer* (and thence in both the 1763 *Revised Táiwān Prefecture Gazetteer* and the 1807 *Revised Táiwān County Gazetter*) , where the term Wū is not used; instead the term "Daoist priests" 道士 appears in the same place where the *Zhūluó County Gazetteer* has Wū.

While this raises questions about why the author of this passage chose the term Wū in this instance, the fact that this usage was not simply copied and continued in subsequent gazetteers is in itself quite instructive. Even where the term Wū has crept into a description of ostensibly Daoist ceremony, later gazetteer editors, who habitually repeat passages and quotations almost verbatim, chose instead not to perpetuate this particular vocabulary, but in essence emended the text in order to clarify that it is Daoist priests, and not Wū, who officiate the Royal Jiào. Moreover, in the *Zhūluó County Gazetteer*, just before and soon after the passage depicting Wū performing the Royal Jiào, the text speaks of "Buddhists and Daoists" conducting rites at Qīngmíng, the Middle Prime (7/15) , and the Lantern Festival (1/15). The 1763 *Revised Táiwān Prefecture Gazetteer* goes so far as to specify that in the last case of the Lantern Festival, it is Daoist priests 道士, and not merely "Buddhists and Daoists" 僧道 who are hired to recite scriptures.[157] Thus, even where Daoists appear to be labeled Wū in the *Zhūluó County Gazetteer*, this one instance is an isolated case which is not repeated in other depictions of Daoist priests, and is rightly seen as the exception which proves the rule. As these passages are in themselves quite informative, they are worth reading as important, early records of what amount to the grandest religious rites of any kind in traditional society. Moreover, the *Zhūluó County Gazetteer* begins by linking popular demand for Buddhist and Daoist ritual with widespread fear of spirits of the dead:

> The common people [say that] in the uncultivated suburbs beyond the city wall there are many ghosts of the dead, and in daytime they use illusion to transform their appearance, and mingled among travelers appear as Buddhist monks. When people arrive at some forlorn place they then fall victim to their depredations. At dawn and twilight [such ghosts] reveal their fierce and hideous appearance; those who happen upon them are thus jolted by fear and so become

[157] 續修台灣府志, j. 13: 十五日，人家多延道士諷經，謂之誦三界經；亦有不用道士，而自備饌盒以燒紙者。(ctext.org edition).

ill. For this reason, on the festivals of Qīngmíng and the Middle Prime, they hire Buddhists and Daoists to recite scriptures and set up Jiào services lasting many days. [People also] collect money to build a boat, complete with implements, paper money, clothing, and foodstuffs. They hire Wū to set up an altar [and perform a rite] called a Royal Jiào. This is performed once every three years in order to send off the Plague King. When the Jiào is finished, there is a sumptuous feast with theatrical performances, while the officiants of the rite with dignified respect kneel and present offerings of food and wine. As soon as the offerings are complete they send the boat off in the water, where it follows wherever the currents and wind in its sails take it. If it becomes moored on a shore, then the people of that village experience many demonic afflictions, and must again perform sacrifice to remove [its curse, and send it off once more]. According to legend, in bygone days some Dutchmen happened upon a boat while at sea, and suspecting it was a pirate vessel they bombarded it with cannon, with great flashes and explosions back and forth. When day came they looked from afar and saw that the boat was filled with paper spirit-images, and the entire [Dutch] crew was terrified. Within a few days, plague had killed more than half of them. In recent years it has become popular to burn the boat at the water's edge, while[in building the boat] bamboo has taken the place of wood, and it is decorated with multi-colored papier-mâché. Each performance of such a Jiào requires several hundred [taels], when less it still requires the productivity of many middle-class people. Even in impoverished remote villages, no one dares to be miserly [in funding a Jiào].

俗城荒郊多鬼，白日幻形，雜過客為僧，至僻地即罹其害。晨昏或現相獰猙，遇者驚悸輒病。故清明、中元延僧道誦經，設醮之事多日。斂金造船，器用幣帛，服食悉備；召巫設壇，名曰王醮。三歲一舉，以送瘟王。醮畢，盛席演戲，執事儼恪，踧進酒食；既畢乃送船入水，順流楊帆以去。或泊其岸，則其鄉多厲，必更禳之。相傳昔荷蘭人夜遇船於海洋，凝為賊艘，舉砲攻擊，往來閃爍；至天明，望見滿船皆紙糊神像，眾大駭。不數日疫死過半。近年有輿船而焚諸水次者，代木以竹，五彩紙褙而飾之。每一醮動數百金，少亦中人數倍之產。雖窮鄉僻壤，莫敢吝者。[158]

[158]諸羅縣志 (1717 [2005]), 8:232.

Written at nearly the same time, the 1720 *Táiwān County Gazetteer* adds a number of minor details which reveal the widespread practice of such Royal Jiào, and again underscore how temple precinct organization is directly linked to the sponsorship of Daoist ritual:

> Taiwanese esteem the Royal Jiào, and hold one once every three years for the purpose of expelling plague. The villages near the city wall all practice this. The people within the [temple] precinct contribute funds to build a boat and set up three spirit images of the Plague Kings made of paper. They hire Daoist priests to perform a Jiào [altar], sometimes [lasting] for two days and nights or three days and nights, but all on the final day offer up a sumptuous feast and put on theatrical performances, called Summoning the [Plague] Kings. To offer wine and present food offerings, they select a man from among those familiar with the affair who kneels and presents the offerings. When the oblations are finished, they place the Plague Kings on the boat [together with] every kind of foodstuff, implements, money and valuables, nothing is left out. Ten or more years ago, every part of the boat was constructed [as a real boat], complete with sails, masts, and rudder. Then it was towed out to sea, whereupon the small craft [which towed it] returned. In recent years they have changed the wood for bamboo, and [now] use paper to complete its construction, the same with all its paraphernalia. When the Jiào is finished, they carry it to the water's edge and burn it there. Whenever a Jiào is performed, the expenses mount to several hundred [taels], those which minimize expenditures to the utmost still near one hundred [taels]. Truly an expense without benefit. As this custom has been carried on for a long time, prohibiting it would be truly difficult. Reducing expenditures and minimizing consumption are among the purposes which worthy officials should emphasize. According to legend, one year long ago a Royal Boat 王船 had just been put out to sea when a Dutch ship happened upon it. [The Ducth] opened fire with canon, missiles, and stone shot, and attacked it all through the night. When dawn came they saw the whole boat and its crew made of paper. The Dutch were terrified, and a great many died. This indeed is baseless nonsense.[159]
>
> 台尚王醮，三年一舉，取送瘟之義也。附郭鄉村皆然。境內之人，鳩金造舟，設瘟王三座，紙為之。延道士設醮，或二日夜、三日夜不等，總以末日盛設筵席演戲，名曰請王；進酒上菜，擇一人曉事者，跪而致之。酒畢，將瘟王置船上，凡百食物、器用、財寶，無一不具。十餘年以前，船皆制造，風篷、桅、舵畢備。醮畢，送至大海，然後駕小船回來。近年易木以竹，用紙

[159] 臺灣縣志，j.1 風俗，雜俗 (ctext.org edition).

> 制成，物用皆同。醮畢，抬至水涯焚焉。凡設一醮，動費數百金，即至省者亦近百焉；真為無益之費也。沿習既久，禁止實難；節費省用，是在賢有司加之意焉耳。相傳昔年有王船一只放至海中，與荷蘭舟相遇，炮火矢石，攻擊一夜；比及天明，見滿船人眾悉系紙裝成。荷蘭大怖，死者甚多。是亦不經之談也。

These early Qīng records of Daoist Royal Jiào in the Táinán region testify to the widespread distribution of the practice, and to its regularity as a community rite performed throughout the region. As all these accounts emphasize the expense and grandeur of the Royal Jiào, we can infer that general economic prosperity enabled communities to sponsor these rites on a regular basis, even if the boats themselves came to be made of less expensive bamboo and paper. And though now the rite of Summoning the [Plague] Kings 請王 is performed at the beginning and not the end of the rite, the other details described here are still evidenced by modern practice, including revival of building complete boats from wood in the case of larger rites.

Moreover we see how the atypical usage of the term Wū to designate the ritual experts performing these rites is limited to the one instance of the *Zhūluó County Gazeteer*; other authors who likewise express disapproval toward the rite as wasteful and "without benefit" still do not resort to calling Daoist priests Wū. As a cultural category and a literary construct, the term Wū does not include Daoist priests, as Daoists themselves have adamantly insisted for centuries.

Documenting Táinán-area Ritual Masters and the Minor Rite

Following the late-Qīng trend toward more attentive depiction of religious practices, the 1894 *Miscellaneous Records of Ānpíng County*[160] 安平縣雜記 is the first indigenous source to

[160] So named for the short-lived 1887 redesignation of Táiwān County 臺灣縣, which in the 20th C. would be named Táinán County

describe Ritual Masters in the Táinán region, and who transmitted ritual forms derived from Mínnán as opposed to Hakka or other traditions from western Fújiàn and Guǎngdōng. This semi-official compilation of "miscellaneous records" is easily the most detailed depiction of Taiwanese religious culture before the 20th C, though certain sections are repeated from earlier gazetteer sources.[161] Originally published without demarcated subdivisions, editors of the *Táiwān Wénxiàn Cōngkān* 臺灣文獻叢刊 divided the text into titled subsections, with one called "Buddhist Monastics and Daoist Priests" 僧侶並道士, in which there are separate entries for Sectarian groups and the Ritual Officer 法官.[162] As these depictions are relevant to the history and historiography of these subjects, it is worth reading the sections on the Daoist priest and Ritual Officer in their entirety, while the others have been included in the appendix of this chapter.

Interestingly, this is one of the only indigenous sources to overtly link Daoist priests – though of the Sāi gonĝ type– with the Wū label. But in doing so, the text first describes them performing three Red-Headed rites: Gathering-in the Killer-spirits 收煞, Supplementing Fortune 補運, and "Plucking Flowers and Changing the Bushel"栽花換斗. Hence where this author judges Daoist priests to be "generally a kind of Wū-xí" 大約即巫覡之類, this pronouncement seems related to the prominent adoption of Red-Headed ritual into these Sāi gonĝ/Daoists' repertoire. As such, this description further suggests that these Sāi gonĝ are really a kind of Ritual Master with perhaps Daoist vestments and elements of Daoist practice, as the same text describes various Jiào as performed by Daoist priests 道士 and not Sāi gonĝ.

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[161] For example, the description of the Royal Jiào in the 風俗附考 section is adapted from the 1720 *Táiwān County Gazetteer*, while in the next section titled 風俗現況, the author adds their own contemporary observations on the performance of Jiào, including the exorcistic Royal Jiào.

[162] Though this text is available online (e.g. ctext.org), the digital versions all reflect the subdivisions made by the *Táiwān Wénxiàn Cōngkān*(第五十二種) edition.

In addition, the ethnographic resolution of the text brings into view the classic etiology of disease and misfortune in the Common Religion: "clashing" or "colliding with and offending" 沖犯 various deities, including those worshipped in temples, but none more so than the environmental entities known as Killer-spirits 煞, especially those of the soil, whose management forms a particular specialty of the Ritual Master.

> Daoist priests in Táiwān are called "Master-Sires" [師公 Sāi gōng]. They do not keep all of their hair [long], nor do they eat a vegetarian diet, [but] are generally a kind of Wū-xí. They set up an altar in their homes, and whenever there are people who have collided with and offended Killer-spirits of the soil, they invite the priest to go to their homes and perform a ritual called "Moving the Earth and Gathering-in the Killer-spirits" 起土收煞. Those whose fortunes are at a low ebb will invite them to a temple to pray and perform ritual [on their behalf], those for men are called "Supplementing Fortune," while those for women are called "Plucking Flowers and Changing the Bushel."
>
> In greater [rites], every local temple of city wards and villages will conduct three or five day Offering [Jiào 醮] rites, or perform a Royal Offering [王醮] ([original note:] The so-called Wángye [or, Royal Lords] of Taiwan, according to popular legend are three-hundred and sixty or more Advanced Scholars 進士 of previous dynasties who died on the same day; the Lord-on-High took pity on them, and ordered that they enjoy blood offerings throughout the four quarters, thus the common people give them the title "Patrolling on behalf of Heaven" 代天巡狩. But in truth it is not so. Like Xiào Wángye, a stele inscription says he is Xiào Hé of the Hàn dynasty, and more or less was an ancient person who, on account of his upstanding character became a god, but his name is not found in historical materials, and is just called "Royal Lord" (Wángye). This is according to the old customs of Zhāng [zhōu] and Quán [zhōu].) [For such a Royal Offering 王醮, temples] must hire Daoist priests to perform rituals, recite scriptures and invocations, and send up memorials to the Heavenly Administration in order to pray for blessings. The Daoist priest's memorials, dispatch writs 牒文, placard memorials 榜文 all state the priest's official title as "Provincial Governor" 節度使. ([original note:] The Jiào probably took shape in the Sòng dynasty, as Lín Língsù and his people created this program when Daoism was patronized by the Emperor, thus we have the title "Provincial Governor," as after the Sòng there was not this position.) Each family that

contributes [money to the Jiào] erects a lantern-pole [at their home], some two or three spans 丈 tall, some four or five spans, and on the lantern-pole is hung a small yellow banner on which it is written "Pray for Peace and Plant Blessing" 祈安植福. At night they light each lantern, and in their rhythmic rows they shine like stars and make for a great sight.

When performing a three day Great Jiào, one day is a Fire Jiào 火醮, one day the Celebration of Completion 慶成,[163] and one day Praying for Peace 祈安. With a five-day or seven-day Great Jiào, there may be the addition of a Water Jiào. On the day after the Jiào concludes they perform a small Jiào 小醮 called the "Little Jiào" 醮仔. Whenever a Jiào is performed there must be a Rite of Universal Salvation, and with all kinds of sacrificial offerings, pigs, sheep, wine, fruit, rice pudding and a "mountain of meat" 肉山, all extremely splendid and plentiful.[164]

As to the management of the rite, there are the Master of the Event, Master of the Jiào, Master of the Altar, Master of the Universal [Rite of Salvation], Head of the Three Officers, Head of the Celestial Master, Head of the Holy Emperor, Head of Praying for Peace, Head of Celebrating Completion, and various titles for "heads" of the faithful. These are ranked in order according to the amount contributed. As for all the [sacrificial] items of the Rite of Universal Salvation, a portion is provided by the community, while the rest is covered by each of the families participating as managers of the event. Laid out before the temple, if the offerings are too few then it is a cause for shame. Several days before the Jiào [begins], they must first invite the Celestial Master (original note: the Celestial Master, surnamed Zhāng, is the legendary Zhāng Dàolíng of the Hàn dynasty.) And several days after the Jiào, they must send-off the Celestial Master. If the funds contributed are considerable, they there will be a papier-mâché image of the Celestial Master with black face and beard, five or six feet tall, dressed in satin robes, and every day they change the color [of the robes] so that the altar installation for the Celestial Master displays

[163] The Celebration of Completion 慶成 usually includes the Daoist version of the Red-Headed Sacrifice to the Killer-spirits 祭煞.

[164] This outline would suggest some considerable evolution of the "three-day" Jiào in Táinán, as the description given here of a is in fact a series of different, one-day Jiào added together. What are now considered Three Day 三朝 and Five Day 五朝 Jiào do not include these preliminary one-day Jiào in the indicated number of days. Elsewhere, in the 風俗現況 section of this text, the author notes that Jiào in the City are variously called Three Day 三條(朝, Mínnán homophones) and Five Day 五條(朝), and gives the same breakdown of the Three Day Jiào.

extremely fine craftmanship. If the funds contributed are fewer, then they go to the Altar of Heaven and merely summon an earthen image of the Celestial Master.[165]

[Among the Daoist priest's] ritual implements there are the copper bell, the ritual whip, the ritual conch-shell, the water-bowl, bell and drum, the hand-held incense burner, and the wooden audience-board.[166]

In general Buddhists and Daoists set up their own official government departments, divided among the Buddhist Regulation Office 僧綱司, Buddhist Assembly Office 僧會司, Daoist Discipline Office 道紀司, and Daoist Register Office 道錄司, and each have ranks and levels. When praying for rain or shine, eclipses of the sun or moon, they are dispatched to government offices 官衙 and temples to recite scriptures, chant invocations, and perform all kinds of rites for the ritual aversion and removal [of disaster]. This is the practice of Táiwān's Buddhists and Daoists.

道士，臺灣名曰「師公」。不蓄全髮，不持齋，大約即巫覡之類。就其家中設壇。凡民間有沖犯土煞者，請其到家作法，名曰「起土收煞」。有命運不佳者，請到廟中祈禱作法，男人曰「補運」，女人曰「栽花換斗」。其大者，城廂及村莊各里廟建三、五天醮事，或作王醮（臺地所謂王爺者，俗傳前朝有三百六十多名進士，同日而死，上帝憐之，命血食四方，故民間有「代天巡狩」之稱。其實不然。如蕭王爺者，碑記謂漢之蕭何，大約古人正直為神，其名有不可考，概稱之曰「王爺」。沿漳、泉舊俗也），必延請道士演科儀、誦經咒、上表章於天曹以祈福。道士表文、牒文、榜文，均自署其銜曰「節度使」（大約醮成於宋代，道居皇帝時林靈素諸人創此名目，故有「節度使」之稱。宋以下無是官也）。捐緣之家，皆豎一燈篙，或二、三丈或四、五丈，篙畔懸一小黃旗，書曰「祈安植福」。夜間各燃一燈，點點紛列，燦如明星，亦大觀也。建三天大醮者，一天火醮、一天慶成、一天祈安。五天、七天大醮者，或多一水醮。醮事既罷之明日，作一小醮。名曰「醮仔」。凡作醮必普度，一切豬羊牲醴酒席果品米膏鈷肉山之類，均極豐盛。董其事者，有主事、主醮、主壇、主普、三官首、天師首、聖帝首、祈安首、慶成首、信士首等各名目。按其捐緣之多寡，分次第焉。普度諸物，公設一份，餘均董事各家自己出金備辦。羅列廟前，以物少者為恥。建醮之前數天

[165] Every detail of this paragraph about the Jiào is still true for the contemporary period, though only occasionally now do temples animate and reverence a papier-mâché image of Celestial Master Zhāng, but when this has been done, as with the Líang Huáng Gōng 良皇宮 in 2016, the image's clothes were still changed every day according to custom.

[166] Note the Ritual Master's whip, here called a fǎ suǒ 法索 is listed as one of the Daoist priest's ritual implements.

，必請天師（天師張姓，相傳漢之張道陵）；建醮之後數天，必送天師（緣金多者，糊一黑面鬍鬚天師像，高五、六尺，衣服均用綢緞為之，一日換一色天師壇舖設極工麗焉）。緣金少者，到天壇請泥塑天師而已。法器有銅鈴、法糸索、法螺、盂缽、鐘鼓、手爐、木笏等件。
凡僧道設自官府者，分僧綱司、僧會司、道紀司、道錄司各名目，均有品級。祈雨、祈晴，日月食，傳之到官衙寺廟念經誦咒，作禳解諸法。此臺灣之僧道行為也。

法官 the Ritual Officer

Ritual Officers themselves say that they can summon spirits and dispatch (spirit-)generals, exorcize perverse [entities], cure diseases for people, and perform all rites of averting [disaster] and removing [adversity]. ([original note:] their lineage-groups are divided into Red-Headed Masters and Black-Headed Masters 青頭師, and their disciples are called "Little Ritual [disciples]" 法仔[167].) When deities 神佛 go out [to process around their] precinct, purification by [flaming] oil and walking on fire are needed in order to summon the spirit. ([original note:] wood and charcoal are spread out on open land in front of the temple and set ablaze with utmost intensity. Then men holding flags and banners, gongs, and carrying the spirit palanquin one by one walk over the fire three times, which is called "treading on fire." [The Ritual Officer] treats diseases for people, and sometimes has effective response. The amount of their fees varies. In addition there are male Wū and female Wū, who perform various kinds of ritual tricks 幻法, and since these are similar to the "Master Sires" 師公 and their kind, their record has been appended here.

The Buddhist School 佛家 takes emptiness and nirvana as their main teaching, the Daoist School takes pure tranquility and non-action as their root, but nowadays they excel at swallowing swords, spitting fire, and performing various kinds of magic tricks 幻術, and as such have completely lost their original nature. The Buddhist monks and Daoists of Táiwān are hardly worthy of mention, and are [Buddhists and Daoists] in name only.

[167] This term 法仔 ho̍at-à, when used as a label for the tradition as a whole I have rendered as "Minor Rite"; here this term is used as a name for the troupe members, as distinct from the Ritual Master or Central Reverend. While such usage is commonplace in the Táinán area, there are other labels for troupe members, including 法爺 ho̍at yiă (Ritual Sires) in Ānpíng, and sometimes ho̍at-â-kâ 法仔腳 (lit. "Feet of the Minor Rite"). Interestingly, in parts of Ānpíng (such as the Ĝan-â-Gyiong̍ Shiā 囡仔宮社, the precinct of the Miàoshòu Gōng 妙壽宮), the term "Minor Rite" 法仔 ho̍at-à indicates the Spirit-medium, a usage possibly linked with the alternative term 法爺 ho̍at yiă, or Ritual Sires, to indicate the Minor Rite troupe members.

法官者，自謂能召神遣將，為人驅邪治病，作一切禳解諸法（其派有紅頭師、青頭師之分，其弟子均名曰「法仔」）。神佛出境、淨油及踏火必用之，以請神焉（鋪柴炭於廟前曠地，熾火極盛，執旗幟、鑼少及扛神轎者，一一從炭上行過三次，名曰「踏火」）。為人治病，亦有時應驗。謝貲亦多少不一。餘若男巫、女巫，作種種幻法，亦近於師公者流，合附錄焉。
佛家以虛無寂滅為宗，道家以清淨無為為本，降而至於吞劍、吐火，作種種幻術，已大失本來面目。臺之僧道，尤不足言，有其名而已。

Aside from the abrupt end to Qīng official regulation and sponsorship following the Japanese annexation of Táiwān in 1895, the depictions here of both Daoists and Ritual Officers demonstrate substantial continuity with modern practice, from many details of the Jiào cycle,[168] to the terminology and lineage affiliations of Minor Rite traditions. On this latter point, the text appears to offer early testimony of different Minor Rite tradition-groups in the Táinán region, with the so-called Black-Head Masters given an unusual orthography (青頭師) which nevertheless can only refer to this, the oldest and most widely-distributed form of the Minor Rite in the Prefectural City and Ānpíng. However, the Red-Head Masters mentioned here are more likely rural Ritual Masters of diverse lineage backgrounds, as the Xújiǎ 徐甲 tradition-group affiliated with the Nánchǎng Bǎoān Gōng 南廠保安宮– and synonymous with the Red-Head label in contemporary Táinán– does not appear to have taken shape until the latter half of the Japanese period. Interestingly, though the author dismisses Taiwanese Daoists and Buddhists as but decadent vestiges of their respective traditions, he nevertheless concludes that the healing rites performed by Ritual Masters are sometimes effective.

[168] The "little Jiào" 醮仔 reportedly performed after the main Jiào is no longer practiced. Rather, one year after a Jiào, the temple will hold a one-day commemorative Jiào of Completion 圓醮 (among other names). Also, the Water Jiào 水醮 is now performed only on the rarest of occasions. I have written on the Fire Jiào 火醮, and the preliminary stages of the Jiào cycle elsewhere.

Where Spirit-mediums are briefly mentioned, they are simply called male and female Wū, rather than by the increasingly common jītǒng 乩童, demonstrating the term Wū never lost its most basic and original meaning of "Spirit-medium," even after this label had for nearly a millennium come to include Ritual Masters as its other primary referent. Moreover, the author rationalizes their inclusion here because these mediums "perform various kinds of ritual tricks 幻法, and are thus similar to the 'Master Sires' 師公 and their kind." Thus it is not as officiants of the Jiào that Daoist priests evoke associations with the Wū in this author's mind, but rather where they perform techniques largely indistinguishable from those of Ritual Masters, and akin to those of Spirit-mediums.[169]

Japanese-era ethnography of the Wū and Ritual Masters

Following the Japanese acquisition of Táiwān in 1895, and especially in the wake of the Xīlái Ān Incident 西來庵事件 (aka Ta-pa-ni Incident 噍吧哖事件) of 1915, in which spirit-writing and the organizational networks of a major Táinán temple dedicated to the Five Blessed Emperors were used to foment a quasi-millenarian anti-Japanese uprising,[170] the Japanese colonial administration directed efforts at documenting religious culture on Táiwān. The primary results of these efforts were Marui Keiji's initial study cited in the opening of this chapter, and its 1919 (Taishō 8) update, *Report on the Investigation into Taiwanese Religion* 台灣宗教調查報告書

[169] Such associations are a reminder that not all Táinán-area Daoist priests of the time were yet fully ordained Língbǎo priests. Wú Zhèngxiàn 吳政憲, for example, has told me that his great-grandfather began "from the Minor Rite" and only later learned the Língbǎo tradition of the Prefectural City. Thus with both the Língbǎo priesthood –especially in rural townships– often performing Red-Headed rites, and other aspiring Daoist priests in truth more Ritual Masters, it is understandable why the author of this relatively well-informed account has associated "Master-Sire" Daoists with the Wū.

[170] See Katz (2005).

(hereafter, *Report on Taiwanese Religion*, or the *Report*)[171], as well as another, even broader survey, the 1921 *Gazetteer of Taiwanese Popular Customs* 臺灣風俗誌.[172] Also noteworthy is the well-known 1934 study *Old Customs of Capping, Marriage, Burial, Sacrifice and Annual Practices of Táiwān* 台灣舊慣冠婚葬祭と年中行事 by the Japanese colonial police official Suzuki Seiichirou 鈴木清一郎.[173]

Of these, Marui's expanded 1919 *Report on Taiwanese Religion* is the most important, not only for its extensive and at times quite detailed documentation of religious practices, but because most other Japanese-era studies of Taiwanese religion have liberally drawn from it, in many cases copying whole sections nearly verbatim, often without attribution.[174] Furthermore, in confronting the phenomena of northern Táiwān's "Dual Schools of Ritual and the Dào" 道法二門 on the one hand, and other kinds of Ritual Masters distributed throughout Táiwān on the other, the approach and terminology adopted in the *Report on Taiwanese Religion* has substantially influenced subsequent literature on the subject, despite also revealing the serious limitations that arise from classifying these traditions in terms of "Daoism," "Fǎ Jiào," and the long-suffering indigenous category of Wū-xí.

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[171] 臺灣宗教調查報告書（第一卷）[*Report on Taiwanese Religion*]. 台北市： 捷幼出版社, 民 82 (1993).
[172] Kataoka Iwao 片岡巖.臺灣風俗誌, 臺北市：南天書局, 1921[大正 10]; Chinese translation: 片岡巖,陳金田譯， 臺灣風俗誌. 臺北市:眾文， 民 86 (1987).
[173] 鈴木清一郎.台灣舊慣冠婚葬祭と年中行事 . 臺北市：南天, 1934; Chinese translation: 鈴木清一郎撰 ; 馮作民譯. 台灣舊慣習俗信仰 . 臺北市：眾文, 民 67 (1978).
[174] While Suzuki Seiichirou's well-known study includes the most unattributed 'quotations' from the *Report on Taiwanese Religion*, the 1935 work *Overview of 'This Island's Religion* 本島人の宗教概觀 (reprinted in *Religion of Taiwan* 臺灣の宗教 [1996]) is written in a more normal form of Japanese (unlike the *Report*), and mostly reproduces information from the *Report on Taiwanese Religion* , but with general attribution to the *Report* given in the preface.

Among its many distinctions, the *Report on Taiwanese Religion* is quite possibly the first text of any kind to present the term "Fǎ Jiào" 法教 ("Ritual Sect") as a name for the traditions of the Ritual Master, in this case specifically those of the Sān-nǎi 三奶派 lineage-group in northern Táiwān. As such the term was used by some practitioners to encapsulate this distinct ritual domain, relative to the contrasting way of "Daoism" 道教. Revealingly, however, the *Report on Taiwanese Religion* places discussion of the Sān-nǎi lineage-group and its putative Fǎ Jiào in its section on Daoist priests 道士[175] and not that of the Wū-xí, as the Sān-nǎi tradition Marui and his assistants encountered was primarily in the context of northern Táiwān's Dual School of Ritual and the Dào 道法二門, in which Sān-nǎi, Tantric-Popular Ritual Method traditions of western Fújiàn have become integrated into the repertoire and transmission of Zhèngyī Daoist lineages in northern Táiwān.[176]

Further reflecting northern Taiwanese custom, the *Report on Taiwanese Religion* first introduces Daoist priests as divided between those who "deliver the living" 度生 and those who "deliver the dead" 度死, whom an accompanying chart, similar to its 1915 predecessor identifies as "Red-Headed Master-Sires" 紅頭司公[師公] and "Black-Headed Master-Sires" 烏頭司公[師公] respectively. Rituals for delivering the living are also further divided into contrasting categories of "Praying for Blessing and Safety" 祈福祈安 (the Jiào and Three Offerings 三獻, i.e. temple-cult rites) on the one hand, and "Exorcizing Evil and Suppressing Killer-spirits" 驅邪押煞 on the other.

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[175] *Report on Taiwanese Religion*, 97-8.

[176] On the Dual School of Ritual and the Dào 道法二門 see Lín Zhèn-yuán 林振源."正邪之辨、道法之合:台灣北部道法二門源流." 於謝世維, 主編, 《經典道教與地方宗教》*Scriptural Daoism and Local Religions* (臺北: 政大出版社, 2014), 359-388.

The text explains that this latter category, which includes such rites as "Settling the Fetus" 安胎, "Lifting the Earth" 起土, and Supplementing Fortune 補運, constitutes the ritual domain of "Fǎ Jiào." Perhaps because these exorcistic rites were performed and transmitted by Daoist priests, Marui concludes that the so-called Fǎ Jiào "is, in the final analysis, a part of Daoism."[177]

Despite having raised the opposing figures of Black-Head Daoists who "save the dead," and their Red-Headed counterparts (who, we are told, do not practice mortuary ritual), both the text of the *Report* and its accompanying chart go on to explain that Black-Headed rites can also mean temple celebrations, and not just mortuary ritual, while these same Black-Headed priests also perform Red-Headed rites of exorcism, so that both are often practiced by the same priests and on the same ritual occasions. This reveals that despite the prominence of northern Taiwanese data in this general appraisal, evidently Daoists of southern Táiwān (from Jiāyì to Píngdōng) have been included in this analysis, as custom imposes no distinctions between practitioners of funerary, temple, and Red-Headed rites in the southern Táiwān. Hence even in this early 20th C. study, the different registers of meaning associated with the "Red-Head" and "Black-Head" dichotomy have been partly conflated, thus spawning considerable and longstanding confusion. We can trace this enduring misconception of equating so-called Black-Headed Daoists with mortuary ritual to these Japanese studies, and their methodological inheritance in the works of Liú Zhīwàn, even though they have already provided enough information to be skeptical of such oversimplification. Beyond northernmost Táiwān, Black-Head simply indicates non-Red-Headed, Língbǎo-Zhèngyī Daoist rites like the Jiào.

[177] *Report on Taiwanese Religion*, 97.

Moreover, as the Red-Headed Master Sire is so defined for his red headscarf, the text tells us, the *Report* then questions the relationship between these Red-Headed Daoists and the Wū-xí, whom the text specifies in this context as Ritual Masters "巫覡(法師)" who also wear the red headscarf. [178] While Marui here explicitly clarifies that there is a distinction between "Daoist priests, narrowly defined, and Wū-xí," since Daoist priests are also said to perform as Ritual Masters (the putative distinction between Fǎ Shī 法師 and Red-Headed Master Sires already slipping), he concludes that the relationship between this domain of Red-Headed ritual and the "Black-Headed" rites of Daoist priests is "extremely complex" and ultimately "difficult to definitively determine."[179]

[178] *Report on Taiwanese Religion*, 98.
[179] *Report on Taiwanese Religion*, 98. The situation is rendered even more indistinct by a general conclusion which finds that the "Daoist and Ritual arts" 道術法術 of the several lineage-groups of "Daoism and the Ritual Sect" 道教及法教, including "the Língbǎo, Lǎojūn, Yújiā 瑜珈, Sānyuán, Celestial Master, Sān-nǎi, and Hǎilù lineage-groups" are "mostly the same with but small differences"靈寶老君派瑜珈派三元派及天師派三奶派海陸派等大同...小異. (98).

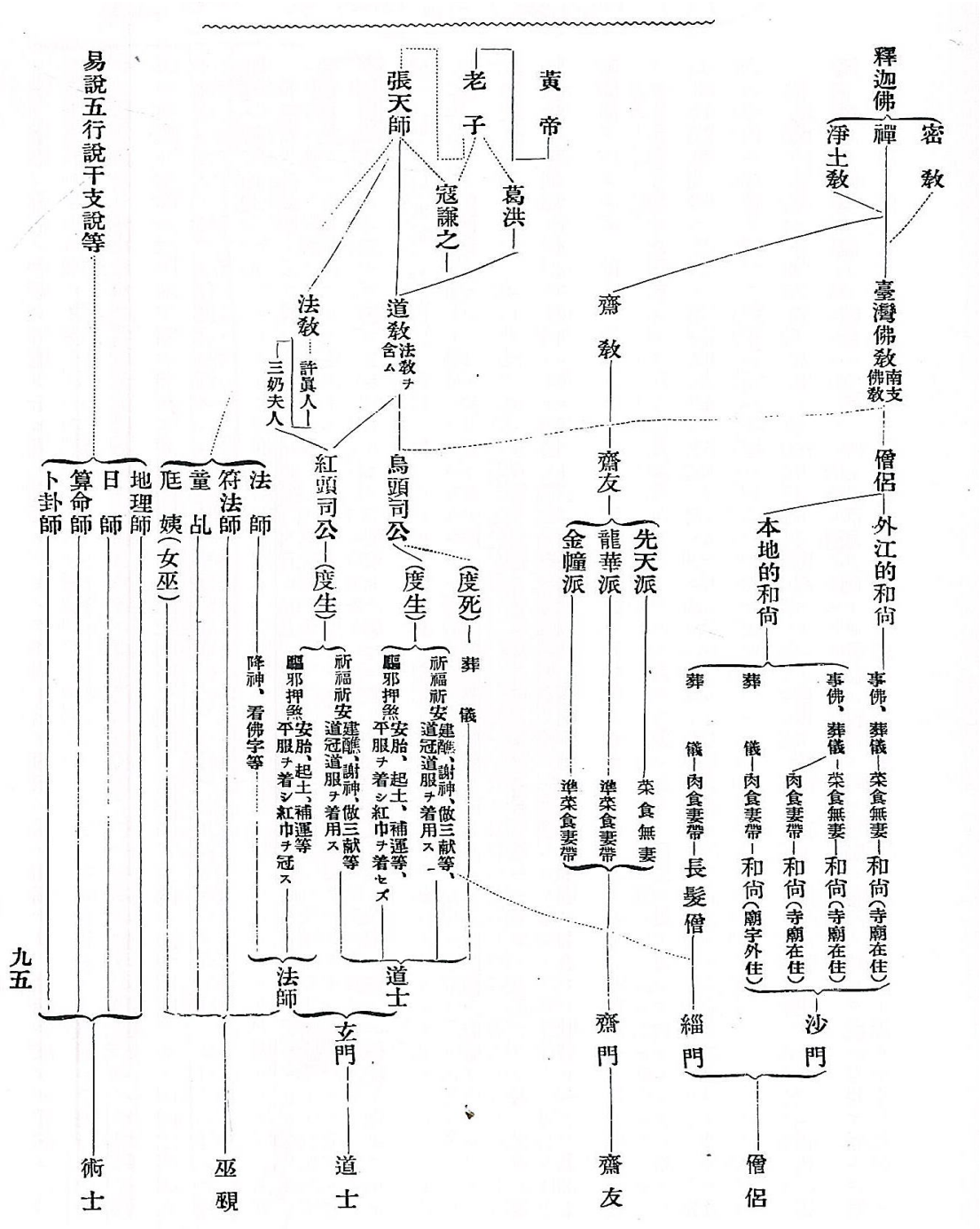

Figure 4.2 Table of ritual traditions and experts from the 1919 *Report on Taiwanese Religion*[180]

[180] 臺灣宗教調查報告書, 第一卷, 95.

Ultimately, the *Report* visually represents these relationships in its updated chart, where again the figure of the Ritual Master 法師 is placed as an intermediating figure, bridging the domains of the Wū-xí and Daoist priests. Continuing, the accompanying text emphasizes both the distinction between these two Daoist and Red-Headed modes of ritual, which are consistently referred to as "two sects" 兩教 or the "two lineage-groups" 派 of the "Celestial Master Sect and Sān-nǎi Sect" 天師教三奶教ノ二派, as well as their "dual practice" 兼修 by the same individual, and dual transmission by the same master-to-disciple lineage.[181] While such circumscribed incorporation of Red-Headed ritual is true for both northern Daoists who transmit Sān-nǎi rites, and southern Língbǎo priests with their own Red-Headed repertoire, the language and organization of the *Report*'s analysis reveals not only the difficulties intrinsic to the subject, but also the inevitable shortcomings of a taxonomy based on simple distinctions between Daoism, "Fǎ Jiào," and the traditional Wū-xí category.

After an excursus on Buddhist ritualists (including "long-haired monks" who perform rites "to deliver the living"), the *Report on Taiwanese Religions* begins a new section on the Wū-xí. In language echoing the ancient *Shuōwén Jiězì* gloss, the Wū-xí are said to be those who "sacrifice to the spirits and dance, thereby causing the spirits to descend and attach themselves to their bodies, whereupon they pray on people's behalf or offer prognostication."[182] Though clearly speaking of Spirit-mediums, the text goes on to specify that Táiwān's Wū-xí include "Ritual Masters, Talisman Ritual Masters, Spirit-mediums, and Female Wū".[183] Of these diverse Wū-xí, the *Report* further

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[181] *Report on Taiwanese Religion,* 99.
[182] Ibid., 100.
[183] 臺灣ニ在ケル巫覡ハ法師符法師童乩女巫等ノ別アリ (Ibid). "Talisman Ritual Masters" 符法師 are specialists in small-scale healing and interpersonal rites (especially dealing with marital relations, as well as revenge attacks and their countermeasures, etc.) who are based in their own home altars and who usually have

explains that "all of these claim that deities or spirits of the dead directly descend into their bodies, whereupon they [expound] bizarre talk or perform bizarre arts."[184]

Clearly, the *Report on Taiwanese Religion* takes spirit-possession as definitive of the Wū-xí category, but in so doing appears to conflate the performance methods of the Spirit-medium with those of their frequent partner, the Ritual Master. In explaining this relationship, wherein the Ritual Master serves with the Spirit-medium and helps interpret their speech and writing, the text further mentions that the Ritual Master is also called 'Ritual Officer,' and is confirmed to be in fact the same figure as the Red-Headed Master Sire 紅頭司公 previously introduced as a Daoist priest.[185] So much for the purported distinction between Red-Headed Daoists and the putative Wū-xí.

Next, the *Report* features a section with enumerated glosses describing the ritual practices of the Wū-xí. The first of these are the Ritual Master's rites of the Invitation of the Spirits 請神 and Summoning the Camps 調營. After an excursus on the Talisman Ritual Master and a catalogue of the Spirit-medium's most common techniques, this section ends with an ethnographic depiction of an unspecified healing rite conducted by a Ritual Master and Minor Rite troupe, here described as reciting invocations for anywhere from thirty minutes to two or three hours. Following this invitation of the altar and whatever other liturgies may have been involved, the Spirit-medium

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but limited ritual contact with temple cults. The *Report on Taiwanese* Religion offers an overview of the Talisman Ritual Master (101-2), and Cohen (1973) presents a study of such a Talisman Ritual Master, though his work does not specifically locate the tradition and role of the Talisman Ritual Master in the overall ecology of religious specialists, or relative to other Ritual Masters and their traditions. It remains an open question whether most so-called Talisman Ritual Masters transmit relatively independent and/or somewhat ad-hoc traditions, or are expressions of more mainline Ritual Master practices.

[184] 皆直接ニ神佛或ハ死者ノ靈ヲ其身ニ假降シ妖言ヲ放チ妖術ヲ行フモノナリ. *Report on Taiwanese Religion*, 100.

[185] Ibid.

enters trance, diagnoses the patient's condition, and indicates the appropriate, exorcistic treatment, all of which, the text informs us, is interpreted by the Ritual Officer.[186] Then there is a detailed account of a "Crossing over Fire" 過火 rite in Yílán, [187] said to be conducted by a Daoist priest 道士 though included in this Wū-xí section evidently for the prominent role played by spirit-possessed sedan-chairs.[188] There follows a vivid description of the initiatory training known as "Sitting under Prohibition" 坐禁, in which Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums are depicted as undergoing a period of seclusion in the temple and emerging together in a ritual procession marked by feats of the Spirit-medium's self-mortification.[189]

Thus for the 1919 *Report on Taiwanese Religion*, spirit-possession is the definitive phenomenon of the Wū-xí category, and since the Ritual Master operates as a partner to the Spirit-medium, it is their close association with Spirit-mediums and spirit-possession (including that of sedan-chairs) which places them within the domain of the Wū-xí, as opposed to the Sān-nǎi Red-Headed Master-Sires of northern Táiwān, whom the text never mentions as performing in conjunction with Spirit-mediums. As I have noted elsewhere, in most cases where Ritual Masters stand closer to the Daoist priest-end of the spectrum, they are often less likely to interact with Sprit-mediums on a regular basis, though where Daoists do perform and directly interact with Spirit-

[186] Ibid., 105. Describing the Minor Rite troupe, the text informs us that "Standing at the Ritual Master's sides are two or three people striking small drums, reciting invocations, and striking gongs."
[187] Both accounts of the "Crossing Fire" and "Sitting in Prohibition" are, among other content, plagiarized by Suzuki Seiichirou, but without attribution or details of the setting. See 臺灣舊慣習俗信仰, 86-88.
[188] No Spirit-mediums are mentioned here, not is it specified whether the priest has tied on a red headscarf, as recorded in the section detailing Daoist priests' rituals (148-155), where a number are specifically described as Red-Headed, including the sacrifice to the Five Fury Spirits 五昌[猖], as well as a rite of "Sending off the Fire" 送火 which involves a Xuéshān Invocation 雪山咒 –universally associated with cooling heat and fire– as well as a certain 朱尾子姑娘神咒(151-2).
[189] *Report on Taiwanese Religion*, 106-7.

mediums, it is always and necessarily in the context of Red-Headed ritual, as in the Língbǎo Attack on the Fortress 打城.

By identifying spirit-possession as definitive of the Wū-xí, the 1919 *Report* represents both a continuation and clarification of the original 1915 *Outline of Old Customs according to the Religion of Taiwan*, whose chart was introduced at the beginning of this chapter. In that initial study, the term Wū-xí was defined as a "collective term" 總稱 for practitioners of "heterodox arts" 邪術, with such "heterodoxy" identified as the domain of religious life which stood in contrast to the officially-recognized schools of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, and which the Qīng court had specifically prohibited, though ineffectively.[190] In this earlier 1915 study, the section on the Wū-xí in this 1915 study opens with the lament that "In this island [of Táiwān], practitioners of heterodox arts who delude the ignorant masses, are indeed many, and the superstitions of this island's people is quite strong and robust." Like the local gazetteer genre of the era, Marui casts the entire phenomenon of the Wū-xí in the modernizing framework of superstition and state-led social reform. Thus it is their "heterodoxy" as revealed by patterns of official recognition and suppression which, together with supposed deceit and error which primarily define the Wū-xí as a category.

In more concrete terms, the 1915 *Outline of Old Customs* then specifies that the Wū-xí include "such types as the Ritual Officer, Spirit-medium, and Female Wū" 法官、童乩、女巫ノ類, while also including such figures and practices as the "'Puppet-Auntie', Spirit-medium, standing as head-of-the-table, carriers of spirit [-sedans], spirit-writing experts, jumping lads,

[190] *Outline of Old Customs according to the Religion of Taiwan* 舊慣ニ依ル臺灣宗教概要, 27.

asking Buddhas, reading Buddha-letters" 尪姨、乩童、豎桌頭、扶神、擲乩、跳童、問佛、看佛字等. What defines the Wū-xí as a category here is its identification with the spiritistic practices of temple cults: spirit-possession, spirit-writing, and spirit-possessed sedan-chairs. And while the language of the text repeats numerous synonyms for Spirit-medium, the first figure listed as representative of the Wū-xí is in fact the Ritual Master.

Neither the 1915 *Outline of Old Customs* nor the 1919 *Report on Taiwanese Religion* clarify that the Ritual Master does not undergo spirit-possession, and this important point may have been unclear to Marui and his assistants. But even if appraised of this distinction, it is still the Ritual Master's proximity to and association with the Spirit-medium and other spiritistic practices of the temple-cult which place the Ritual Officer at the head of every Japanese-era overview of Taiwanese "Wū-xí," and not their specifically Red-Headed ritual repertoire, which is often shared with "Red-Headed" Daoist priests, who are as consistently distinguished from Wū-xí in these Japanese studies as in the Chinese historical literature.

In the 1921 *Gazetteer of Taiwanese Popular Customs* 臺灣風俗志, its chapter entitled "Wū-xí of Táiwan" opens by citing, with slight paraphrase, the passage from the *Zhūluó County Gazetteer* examined above:

> The common people esteem Wū, and when epidemics spread they order [Wū] to ritually remove it. Then there are [those] neither Buddhist nor Daoist, called "Hakka Masters"...[191]
> 俗尚巫，疫病輒令禳之, 又有非僧非道，曰客仔師...

[191] Kataoka Iwao 片岡巖, 陳金田譯. 《臺灣風俗誌》(臺北市：南天書局, 1921 [大正 10]; Chinese translation: 臺北市:眾文，民 86 [1987]), 525. The quote here preserves the slight paraphrasing made by the *Gazetteer of Taiwanese Popular Customs*.

After presenting most of this passage, including the divination by "rice trigrams," the use of talismans, and the fees charged by the Hakka Master for their ineffective rites, the *Gazetteer of Taiwanese Popular Customs* interprets the passage by saying, "This is none other than the Wū-xí falsely claiming to cause spirits to descend and inquire with Buddhas, expounding absurd talk to delude the masses." In turn, the text offers a definition of the Wū-xí by repeating the exact language of the *Zhūluó County Gazetteer* passage and its subsequent interpretation, and determines that "the so-called Wū-xí are those who are neither Buddhist nor Daoist, who falsely claim to cause spirits to descend and inquire with Buddhas, and recklessly expound talk of Yīn and Yáng, the Five Phases, spirits, ghosts, and fiendish monstrosities in order to delude the ignorant."[192]

This definition is meant to include not only ritual experts of the temple cult, but also the mixed domain of prognosticating "Masters of the Five Arts" 五術師 that Marui, in both the 1915 *Outline of Old Customs* and the 1919 *Report on Taiwanese Religion* and with good reason carefully excluded from his Wū-xí category; historical sources likewise have never labeled Fēngshuǐ masters or physiognomists as Wū.[193] Though distracted by this inclusion of professional prognosticators, the *Gazetteer of Taiwanese Popular Customs* still identifies Wū-xí as primarily the ritual experts of the Common Religion ("neither Buddhist nor Daoist") who cause spirits to descend. This movement of spirits into the human realm forms the basis of what I have called the "spiritistic paradigm" on which the Common Religion is structured, and indeed "causing spirits to

[192] 臺灣風俗志, 525.

[193] In both of these works, these "prognosticators," of "Masters of the Arts [of Divination]" 術士 are given their own separate domain, which better reflects their actual, independent professional space, outside of the temple-cult per se.

descend" is one of if not the main function of the Ritual Master who, unlike the Daoist priest, summons spirits of the Common Religion including those which take possession of mediums.

The *Gazetteer of Taiwanese Popular Customs* begins its section on the Wū-xí with an itemized overview of spirit-writing cults, whose priority in the discussion may have been prompted by the 1915 Xī-lái Ān Incident 西來庵事件, which the text names as an example of just such an "Assembly for [Spirits] Descending into a Brush" 降筆會, and which would have been familiar to his readers.[194] Only after this somewhat detailed depiction of spirit-writing (by dedicated groups within the cultic realm of the Common Religion, and not Sectarian societies)[195] does the text introduce Spirit-mediums 乩童 as the second item under the Wū-xí heading.[196] A rather confused overview of Spirit-mediums ensues, in which an unsourced legend is cited claiming that Kubilai Khan's conquest of Tibet brought Tibetan Buddhist traditions[197] into contact with Chinese Spirit-mediums, a connection made more credible to the author perhaps by his puzzling conclusion that research finds no material in the historical record describing Spirit-mediums and their methods in Chinese history. Nevertheless, he still infers that Spirit-mediums must have originated in southern China –after this Yuán-era cross-pollination– and thence came to Táiwān with Hàn Chinese

[194] 臺灣風俗志, 526. "Descending into a brush" 降筆 (jiàng bǐ) is the standard term in historical literature for spirit-writing, and is more common in the literature than terms such as "Holding the Phoenix" 扶鸞 (fú luán) and related expressions, which are more typically used by either Sectarian groups, or dedicated spirit-writing groups within the cultic structure of the Common Religion.

[195] The text specifies several deities enshrined and/or summoned in these spirit-writing groups, including the Jade Emperor, Guān Gōng, Spirit-Officer Wáng (Sā Shǒujiān's converted demon, here named 都天豁落靈官天君), and Celestial Master Zhāng among others. There is a separate section on Sectarian 齋教 "Vegetarian Teaching" groups (587-590) which also appears based on, but less informative than the more substantial treatment given these groups in the *Report on Taiwanese Religion*.

[196] 臺灣風俗志, 527.

[197] An unidentifiable "Shāmóliú" sect「沙摩留」教派 is specified as the source of this connection. Whether this is meant to indicate "shaman" is unclear, as I find no cross reference for this term or its components among Tibetan schools of Buddhism, or relating to Tibetan Bon for that matter.

immigrants.[198] In the following entries detailing the Spirit-medium's principle rites and methods[199] we also encounter the Ritual Master, who is introduced as the Spirit-medium's interpreter, and likewise depicted as participating in the rite of "Sitting in Prohibition" mentioned previously. [200]

Next the "Red-Head" Ritual Officer is given his own slender entry, where he is described as "the person who manages affairs of the spirits together with the Spirit-medium."[201] In keeping with the unifying theme of "causing spirits to descend," the text emphasizes how the Ritual Master specializes in summoning spirits and facilitating spirit-possession, as well as exorcizing malevolent spiritual entities in the environment. Interestingly, the author finds the Ritual Master's prominent use of mudras "is very similar to the secret methods used by the [Tantric] Shingon school."[202]

Despite its largely derivative nature, Suzuki Seiichirou's *Old Customs of Capping, Marriage, Burial, Sacrifice and Annual Practices of Táiwān* 台灣舊慣冠婚葬祭と年中行事 (hereafter, *Old Customs of Táiwān*) [203] further reflects the ways in which Japanese studies of

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[198] 臺灣風俗志, 527-8.

[199] Among various feats of self-mortification, like "splitting the forehead" 剖頭 and using the spiked ball 刺球 are two rites which illustrate what I call the "Shamanic Lane" within the Spiritistic Paradigm primarily shaping traditional Chinese Religion: "Ascending to the Heavenly Court" 上天庭 and "Descending into the Earth Prefecture" 落地府. While performed by a Spirit-medium in trance, and thus bereft of the control and recall which properly characterize the Shaman, such journeys along a cosmic axis to Heaven and the Underworld, where various ritual transfers are then enacted by the god/medium on behalf of patients or the temple community, these represent manifestations of a broadly Shamanic form of religious practice, and can be recognized as such only when we refuse to submerge the entire religious culture in the vague misnomer of "shamanism." However, this movement of people and/or gods from the human realm and into the spirit-realm, which I take as partially definitive of a genuinely Shamanic paradigm, does not structure the fundamental nature of the religious culture as a whole, which is instead completely oriented toward and informed by the premise of spirits moving from various departments of the spirit realm and "descending" into the human realm, an orientation which I have characterized as forming a Spiritistic Paradigm. The presence of quasi-shamanic practices within this overall Spiritistic Paradigm can be seen as forming a "Shamanic Lane" –one possible avenue but neither the primary nor most influential mode of religious interaction between spirits and humans.

[200] 臺灣風俗志, 528-9.

[201] Ibid., 530.

[202] Ibid., 530.

[203] Translated into Chinese by the title *Old Customs and Beliefs of Táiwān* 臺灣舊慣習俗信仰 (1978).

Taiwanese religion consistently framed discussion of Ritual Masters in the classical category of the Wū-xí, primarily on the basis of their association with Spirit-mediums. Like the other Japanese-era works he plagiarizes, Suzuki offers a dedicated section to "The Ritual Arts of Wū-xí and Masters of Arts" 巫覡術士的法術,[204] in which he also lumps prognosticators together in a general category with ritual experts of the Common Religion. Reflecting the plagiaristic nature of his work, Suzuki largely repeats a passage from the *Report on Taiwanese Religion* which stresses how even though the Míng and Qīng courts outlawed "the activities of Wū-xí and Masters of Arts," not only were these prohibitions a dead letter in society, "even many officials and gentry too were extremely superstitious, and in their capacity as officials publicly officiated at sacrifices to the City God and then sat to watch Spirit-mediums perform their bizarre arts."[205] While this observation underscores the extent of official and gentry participation in the late imperial Common Religion, both the *Report on Taiwanese Religion* and Suzuki's *Old Customs of Táiwān* use this quote to frame traditional Chinese culture as fundamentally superstitious, and therefore in need of Japanese colonial modernization.

Slightly paraphrasing the *Gazetteer of Taiwanese Customs,* Suzuki identifies the definitive function of the Wū-xí as their ability to "summon spirits to become attached to their bodies" and on people's behalf offer sacrifice and perform divination. Though again clearly indicating Spirit-mediums, Suzuki, echoing his sources goes on to say that "Táiwān's Wū-xí include Ritual Masters 法師, Talisman Ritual Masters, Spirit-mediums 乩童, and 'Puppet-Aunties'." Thus, like the *Report on Taiwanese Religion,* Ritual Masters rather than Spirit-mediums are presented first in

[204] Citing the 1978 Chinese translation *Old Customs of Táiwān*, 77.
[205] *Old Customs of Táiwān*, 77. The original passage is found in *Report on Taiwanese Religion*, 100.

the following discussion, where Suzuki attempts to distinguish between "Ritual Masters, broadly defined" and those "narrowly defined", but in fact such "broadly defined" Ritual Masters are revealed to be all those outside the northern Daoist tradition of the Dual School of Ritual and Dào 道法二門, as Suzuki describes such "broadly defined" Ritual Masters as performing the Summoning of the Camps 調營 with Spirit-mediums, while he equates "narrowly defined" Ritual Masters with "Red-Headed Master Sires" 紅頭司公, also labeled "Red-Headed Daoist priests" 紅頭道士 in the text.[206]

In the pages that follow, Suzuki describes a number of rites involving Ritual Masters (evidently all of the "broadly defined" variety) collaborating with Spirit-mediums, including the Descent into the Underworld 觀落陰 and its variant (usually called Plucking Flowers 栽花 or Entering the Flower Garden 入花園) where the Spirit-medium and/or Ritual Master water and add fertilizer the primordial "Flower-tree" 花叢 believed to represent a person's "Primal Spirit" 元神.[207] The Ritual Master is also depicted as facilitating rites for spirit-writing by spirit-possessed sedan-chairs, and the section concludes with another, more detailed overview of Summoning the Camps, also lifted from the *Report on Taiwanese Religion.*[208] Though neither source specifies where this Summoning the Camps was observed, its division into consecutive "Civil Camps" 文營 and "Martial Camps" 武營 generally conforms with practice in Táinán.

Taken together, these works of Japanese ethnography represent the first examinations of these traditions made by outside, non-native observers on Táiwān. As expressions of proto or

[206] *Old Customs of Táiwān*, 77.
[207] *Old Customs of Táiwān*, 78-80.
[208] *Old Customs of Táiwān*, 80, cf. *Report on Taiwanese Religion*, 101.

quasi-scholarship, with limited historical depth and subordinated to a colonial project, these works offer a remarkable amount of information in a form that lies somewhere between primary, historical literature and secondary, analytic research. As such, all of these studies demonstrate a basic continuity with indigenous Chinese literature in using the terms Wū and Wū-xí to label both Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters, and to exclude Daoist priests from the Wū-xí category. But unlike indigenous authors (including most writing today), these Japanese researchers felt compelled to offer some definition or descriptive breakdown of just what the Wū-xí were, or what made them Wū-xí.

These Japanese studies consistently identify spirit-possession as the core phenomenon uniting the category of the Wū-xí. And while Suzuki Seiichirou and the *Gazetteer of Taiwanese Customs* trace the etymology of the term Wū-xí back to its ancient usage indicating female and male Spirit-mediums respectively, the fact that the Wū-xí label had come to include Ritual Masters, while mediums of the temple-cult have come to be called đang-geê 童乩 or jītǒng 乩童, these developments are simply accepted unproblematically as aspects of the religious culture. However, we have seen where the *Report on Taiwanese Religion* finds difficulty maintaining its distinction between Red-Headed Ritual Masters whom it deems are Wū-xí, and those whom it maintains are not, though again this distinction is prompted primarily by the difference between Daoist priests, on the one hand, and independent lineages of Ritual Masters on the other. At a rhetorical level, Daoists are not Wū, even where shared ritual traditions expose the difficulty of categories based on this ancient terminology, and where the phrase "Fǎ Jiào" has entered the lexicon.

As the sources explored in this chapter show, these Japanese researchers did not invent the usage whereby Ritual Masters were labeled as Wū or Wū-xí, but inherited this taxonomy and

nomenclature from the long precedence of Chinese historical literature, even as more colloquial terms for Spirit-medium had, by the early 20th C., helped shift the term Wū from being an ambivalent name to a general category. In both late imperial Chinese literature and early Japanese ethnography, Ritual Masters –where sufficiently distinct from Daoist priests– have been perceived as belonging to the realm of the Wū, together with the Spirit-mediums whom they often accompany, and at times somewhat resemble. But while these Japanese writers may have conflated the performative methods of the Spirit-medium and Ritual Master, clearer analysis reveals that the development of ritual technologies for controlling the gods and mediums of the Common Religion, including techniques of liturgical "resemblance" borrowed in part from Spirit-medium performance, have enabled the Ritual Master tradition to become a fixture throughout much of southern China and diasporic communities in Táiwān and Southeast Asia.

A Chapter in Oral History: Documenting the Táinán Minor Rite

The last source I will present in this chapter is also among the most important for the history of the Minor Rite in Táinán, as it documents 19th and 20th C. practices of the main transmission-lineage of the so-called Black-Head Minor Rite tradition-group in Táinán, in its place of origin, the temple of Koxinga, or the King who Opened the Mountain [of Táiwān]" 開山王廟 (Kāishān Wáng Miào), also known as the Shrine of the King of Yánpíng Prefecture 延平郡王祠. In Táinán proper, the Minor Rite altar-traditions traceable to the Kāishān Wáng Miào include the Héshèng Táng, where the author learned and practiced the Minor Rite. Altars of this

transmission-lineage are marked by the enduring distinction of still invoking the "Holy King who Opened Tái[wān]" 開台聖王[209] near the beginning of every ritual performance.

In 1961, local Táinán historian Lián Jǐngchū 連景初 published a research article on the history of the Kāishān Wáng Temple entitled "Investigation into the history of the Shrine of the King of Yánpíng Prefecture"[210] 明延平郡王祠沿革考, with considerable information gathered from interviews with elders who had lived through much of the Japanese period (1895-1945). From the details provided by his informants, Lián presents a rich portrait of the ritual life of the temple, and specifically notes the practices of Ritual Masters of the Minor Rite, whom he describes as "a kind of Wū-xí":

> Since the Qīng dynasty, the altar-groups 派within [the Temple of the King who Opened the Mountain (of Táiwān)] include the United Heart Reverence, the Sincere Heart Reverence, the Harmonious Heart Reverence and the Hall of Loyal Elegance.[211] Among these the United Heart Reverence manages events of sacrificial offerings and welcoming gods [in ritual processions], the Sincere Heart Reverence is responsible for the sedan team (original note: carrying the spirit-sedan), the Harmonious Heart Reverence fills the post of Ritual Master (original note: commonly called the Minor Rite 法仔, a kind of Wū-xí). Of the above three altar-groups 祧, each altar-group has sixty people, and each has their own spirit-image of Zhèng Chénggōng which they enshrine and worship. After the Japanese occupation, in the annual popular sacrifice to Zhèng Chénggōng only the three altar-groups of the United Heart Reverence, the Sincere Heart Reverence, and the Harmonious Heart Reverence are still in existence. [...]
>
> Since the Qīng dynasty, the popular sacrifices to the King who Opened the Mountain [of Táiwān] Zhèng Chénggōng occur on the sixteenth day of the First Month. On this day, every household within the Six-Directions Precinct 六合境 prepares sacrificial offerings, vegetable dishes and other delicacies, and then go to

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[209] HST 1:3.

[210] Lián Jǐngchū 連景初，「明延平郡王祠沿革考」，《臺南文化》第七卷第二期. 臺南：臺南市文獻委員會，民 50 年 9 月 30 日,(1961):1-8.

[211] According to the *Táiwān Shěng Táinán Shì Sìmiào Dàguàn*these are "Sacrificial Associations" 祭祀會, essentially the same as the form of organization known as the "Deity Association" 神明會, most of which were formerly associated with major temples. Such organizations have declined in postwar Táinán. (《臺灣省臺南市寺廟大觀》,67).

the Temple of the King who Opened the Mountain and reverently pays their respects [to the deity]. On the afternoon of the day before (the 15th), the Ritual Master of the Harmonious Heart Reverence performs rites of Settling the Camps 安營 inside the temple, and summons all the soldiers and celestial generals of the Five Camps. On the first day of the sacrifice there is also a Rewarding of the Generals 犒將, and on the last day they again Reward the Generals, and afterward Withdraw the Camps 收營.

自清以來，其派下有心同敬、誠心敬、和心敬及忠雅堂。其中心同敬辦理祭祀及迎神時務，誠心敬負責轎班（抬神轎）和心敬充任法師（俗稱法仔，為巫覡之一種），上述三祧，每祧派下各有六十人，且均刻有開山王鄭成功神像為供奉祀。[...?]及至日據以後，每年民間祭祀鄭成功，只存同心敬[心同敬]、誠心敬、和心敬三祧而已。[...]

自清以來，民間之祭祀開山王鄭成功，係在每年農曆正月十六日 [...] 六合境內各住戶，在每年正月十六日均備菜饌牲禮，赴開山王廟虔誠致敬，先一日（十五日）下午由和心敬法師在廟內安營召請五營諸神兵天將，祭祀首日並犒將，最後一日復犒將，然後收營。

This account places Minor Rite ceremony at the center of a major temple's liturgical year, with rites surrounding the main deity's birthday which are, in their broader outlines, consistent with contemporary practice. In fact, the performance of a Settling of the Camps 安營, plus successive Rewarding of the Troops 犒賞(or here, Generals 犒將), and finally a Withdrawal of the Camps 收兵 would suggest a particularly grand ritual program. Curiously, there is no mention of a Minor Rite Celebration of Longevity 祝壽 performed to mark the birthday of the deity, though this may have escaped notice as unlike the Rewarding of the Troops, there is no special arrangement of food offerings for the Celebration of Longevity, while such offerings usually involve extensive community participation. It is unclear when this annual custom of Minor Rite ceremony lapsed at the Kāishān Wáng Temple, as Lián's article does not confirm whether such ceremonies were still being practiced then, or had already ceased. Nevertheless, the temple still enshrines the Five Camps on its altar, and has in fact installed a new set of Five Camps Heads 五營頭 in recent years.

Moreover, we see that in the mid 20th C., an indigenous Taiwanese author still sought to identify the Minor Rite as "a kind of Wū-xí." As I have shown throughout this chapter, the association of Ritual Masters with the label or category of the Wū has stood as a kind of literary convention and cultural taxonomy since the Southern Sòng dynasty. But by the middle of the 20th C., how much of this literary legacy remained accessible to readers of Chinese? What associations did this label evoke in the minds of Lián Jǐngchū and his readers? Why was the use of this label seen as meaningful or helpful information?

For despite the long association of the Ritual Master with the domain of the Wū, at some point in the 20th C., the meanings and associations which this ambiguous term long carried began to fray, so that by the later 20th and early 21st centuries, in the realm of Chinese-language scholarship especially, the idea that the term Wū once primarily meant "Spirit-medium," or that it later came to likewise embrace Ritual Masters, all such meanings to the term became curiously obscured, so that a great deal of scholarship which uses the term does so in ways which reveal their authors simply do not have a clear idea what the term means or has meant historically. Instead, many scholars have used the term Wū in a range of amorphous and problematic ways that gravely amplify the needless pallor of vagueness which has so long plagued the study of traditional Chinese religion.

The Travails of the Wū in Modern Scholarship

The roughly 4th C. BCE text *Discourses of the States* 國語 (*Guǒyǔ*) offers the classic definition of the Wū which clearly indicates that Wū were Spirit-mediums:

> [Among] the ancients, the people and divinities were not mixed (comment: 'mixed' means 'united'. The officials called 'Controller of the People' and 'Controller of the Divinities' were each separate.)[212] Those among the people whose spiritual essence was bright and

[212] This comment somewhat changes the meaning, which would otherwise appear to mean that spirits did not mingle with humans, a meaning taken up in early Daoist texts such as the *Lù Xiānshēng Dàomén Kēlüè*.

undivided, and were moreover able to be perfectly solemn and dignified, with intelligence capable of interpreting the meanings above and below, their sanctity able to illuminate that which is distant and make it clearly known, their brilliance able to illuminate [the spiritual realm] , their discernment able to hear [the spiritual realm], thus bright spirits descended into them.
古者民神不雜(注：雜，會也。謂司民、司神之官各異。) 民之精爽不攜貳者，而又能齊肅衷正爽，其智能上下比義，其聖能光遠宣朗，其明能光照之，其聰能聽徹之，如是則明神降之。[213]

Likewise, the *Shuōwén Jiězì* 說文解字 glosses Wū as "An invoker, a woman who can serve the formless [spirits] by dancing and [thereby causing] spirits to descend." 巫，祝也。女能事無形，以舞降神也. As intermediaries between humans and spirits, sometimes Wū were said to perceive spirits in dreams, or to "see" them,[214] but more often they are described as "causing spirits to descend" and then make pronouncements, in keeping with the ancient definition given in the *Discourses of the States*, and echoed in the *Gazetteer of Taiwanese Customs*.[215]

However, the idea that the term Wū refers to Spirit-mediums at all is far from clear in much writing on the subject, particularly in Chinese-language scholarship, where authors are relieved of the need to translate, and thereby explain the term, or clearly identify its referents. Greatly confounding the issue are the different terms from western discourse –including 'magic' and, most consequentially, 'shamanism,' which have, in the former case been translated into Chinese by compounds of the word Wū, or in the case of 'shamanism' were simply adopted without critical

[213] 國語, 楚語，j.18　楚語下,1 觀射父論絕地天通.
[214] See for example 太平廣記 j.124, 報應二十三, 寇報, 侯溫; 太平廣記 j. 319 鬼四, 胡茂迴; 太平廣記 j.325 鬼十, 孟襄; 太平廣記 j. 329 鬼十四, 鄭從簡, all of which describe Wū perceiving ghosts or spiritual entities.
[215] A typical example from the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì*, which says how the female Wū of a temple "could cause spirits to descend and proclaim instructions" 能降靈宣教 :太平廣記 j. 283 巫, 女巫秦氏
義熙五年。宋武帝北討鮮卑。大勝。進圍廣固。軍中將佐。乃遣使奉牲薦幣。謁岱岳廟。有女巫秦氏。奉高人。同縣索氏之寡妻也。能降靈宣教。言無虛唱。使使者設禱。因訪克捷之期。秦氏乃稱神教曰。天授英輔。神魔所擬。有征無戰。蕞爾小虜。不足制也。到來年二月五日。當尅。如期而三齊定焉。

appraisal as a ready-made translation and explanation, with significant consequence for subsequent studies of Spirit-mediums in history and contemporary societies.

In western-language scholarship, following the adoption of the term "shaman" as a translation (and thus, interpretation) of the term Wū by L.C. Hopkins (1945), Edward Schafer (1951) and Arthur Waley (1955),[216] the rendition as "shaman" gained an almost unquestioned ubiquity in scholarship. Only in the 1990s's and 2000's did a handful of scholars (Dean 1988/1993, Andersen 1990/2007, von Faulkenhausen 1995, and Davis 2001) begin using the term "spirit medium" rather than "shaman" as an interpretive translation of the word Wū. While many scholars still insist on conflating Spirit-mediums and shamans in their writings (Sutton 2000/2004, Yang 2015, Clart 2010), the recognition that the term indicates Spirit-mediums at all, rather than merely a vaguely defined form of ecstatic "shamanism" is a relatively recent development. Hence the history and interpretation I have presented in this chapter reflect ongoing work, and is hardly just an exercise in stating the obvious.

There are two general tendencies visible in most Chinese-language (and certain English-language) studies which examine the Wū: one which is almost totally tautological, in which the Wū are never clearly defined or specified at all, and the other, impelled by the assumption or desire to equate the Wū with "shamans". In between are other positions in which a failure to clearly identify the Wū leads not just to an intrinsic vagueness, but then compounds or explots this vagueness in order to advance certain agendas regarding interpretation of Chinese and Taiwanese religion.

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[216] For an overview of this historiography and the relevant citations see Giles Boilieu, "Wu and Shaman," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol. 65, No. 2 (2002): 350-378.

A prime example of the tautological approach is found in the works of Yè Míngshēng, who relies heavily upon the term Wū to explain the origins and nature of the Lűshān Ritual Master tradition itself, but who never once identifies what these Wū might have been, what specific features or associations might have characterized the Wū, or how, beyond the names of Wū-related deities mentioned in Bái Yùchán's famous passage, this ancient Wū heritage concretely shaped the Lűshān tradition. Nowhere does he raise or acknowledge the idea that the term Wū could possibly refer to Spirit-mediums.

Instead, in the brief but informative sections he devotes to interaction among Lűshān Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums, he uses the modern colloquial term jītǒng 乩僮 (sic), and the regionally-prevalent homonyms 銅 (tǒng/dōng) and 銅馬.[217] Indeed, two volumes of invocations are transmitted in the Jiànyáng tradition for facilitating spirit-possession (though aside from lines commanding the spirits to descend, are rather unlike the Mín-Tái Minor Rite texts and their kin), and Yè duly notes that when Spirit-mediums require assistance entering or exiting trance, Ritual Masters will employ these invocations to hasten or terminate possession.[218] While he states that Lűshān Daoist altars 道壇 have a "close" 密切 relationship with Spirit-mediums, this, he explains, refers to a social, rather than ritual dimension, and is due to the crucial role Spirit-mediums play in ordering the performance of Jiào and selecting the altars to perform the rite. Despite Ritual Masters sometimes assisting possession, Yè finds that "in terms of Daoist ritual, the two have no

[217] *Jiànyáng* 115-117.
[218] One is called the "Copper-horse Book" 銅馬本, and the other "Descending into the Raw Youth Book"降生僮本. See Jiànyáng 115-117, where the text explains "descending into the youth" 降僮 has become rendered in the homophonous expression 降銅.

place in common,"[219] and that Ritual Masters adopt a "not too close and not too distant"不即不離 approach in their dealings with Sprit-mediums, so as "to better manage" their working relationship.

Thus despite tracing the entire history of the Lűshān tradition to ancient Wū, nowhere in his writings does Yè Míngshēng raise the possibility of a special, historical, or performative relationship between Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums, or connect the historical Wū with Spirit-mediums.[220] Nevertheless, where he writes of historical backgrounds, the formation of Lűshān tradition is said to spring from the ancient Wū of southeastern China who, other than being labeled Wū, are not characterized in any way, nor is the relationship between Daoists and these Wū, though Yè credits the former with imparting an important influence on the development of the Lűshān tradition, a process which too is merely invoked, and never explained. In his primary article investigating the formation of the Lűshān, Ritual Master tradition,[221] Yè argues that the

> Lűshān lineage-group originated in Wū ritual method
> It is unclear when the Lűshān lineage-group specifically took shape [but...] from viewing currently available information, at its start the Lűshān lineage-group's original form was Wū ritual method 巫法, called the 'Lűshān ritual method' 閭山法, and at least prior to the Song dynasty had already taken shape in the old region of the ancient state of Yuè –Fújiàn, jiàng, and Jiāngxī. This ancient Wū-art 巫術, Wū ritual method 巫法, and Wū Religion 巫教 was influenced by Daoism and developed into a distinct religious lineage-group. From examination of the actual activities of contemporary Daoist altars, the traces of this kind of Wū ritual method are perfectly obvious.[222]
> 一)閭山派源於巫法
> 閭山派具體形成於何時不詳，但[...]從目前資料看，閭山派之初始形態為巫法，名曰'閭山法'，至少在宋代之前已形成於閩、浙、贛之古越國舊地，是

[219] 道法上而者並無共通之處. *Jiànyáng*, 116.
[220] *Jiànyáng*, 116-7.
[221] 葉明生,「閭山派源流考探」。《道韻》第九輯(2001), 150-184.
[222] Ibid ., 151.

> 由古代巫術、巫法、巫教受道教的影響而發展起來的一支教派。從目前道壇之實際活動情況考察，這種巫法的痕跡依然十分明顯。

As Yè next presents Bái Yùchán's well-known passage on the Wū, what he evidently deems to be "perfectly obvious" are primarily the many deities mentioned in Bái Yùchán's description which, remarkably, still appear in surviving liturgical texts and altar pantheons of certain Fujianese Lűshān traditions. However, beyond these specific symbols, Yè is unable to identify or describe any characteristic feature of these ancient Wū other than associating the term Wū with the religious culture of southeastern China. This difficulty is further revealed in the following section where Yè observes that

> In the [Lűshān] Daoist altars of Lóngyán, however, due to the comparatively greater degree of influence from Daoism 道教, the traces of the Wū have tended to become indistinct, yet the Wū ritual method has not disappeared, but is still substantially preserved within the 'Wánglǎo Ritual Teaching', and become a kind of 'Wū inside, Dào outside' configuration.[223]
> 而龍巖道壇由於受道教影響程度較大，巫法部分深藏於儀軌之中，從而使巫道融置一處，故巫的痕跡已趨於模糊，但巫法並未消失，仍然在其'王姥教法'中得以充分保留，形成一種'內巫而外道'的格局。

What, precisely, has become "indistinct" 模糊 while forming an "interior" of Wū-content is never identified. Perhaps one could venture that what Yè might have in mind is that this hidden Wū influence is, for him, expressed in a kind of performance style, more dynamic, martial, or theatrical in some ways, or perhaps reflected in some of the ritual media involved, or the exorcistic nature of certain rituals. The only time Yè provides evidence for such speculation is where he mentions that northeastern Fujianese Ritual Masters, reminiscent of the Dual School of the Dao and Ritual

[223] Ibid., 153.

[method] 道法二門 in northern Táiwān, are given both a Daoist "True title" 真號 and a "Ritual title" 法號 , in which the latter is said to indicate the "martial" 武 domain of Lűshān ritual, which Yè further asserts (without evidence or argument) represents the Wū tradition.[224] Aside from this one linkage of the Wū with the martial, Yè never identifies any other element or quality which might characterize the Wū, identify the them as a particular kind of ritual expert, or reveal their enduring influence. Hence despite their central importance to his historical thesis, for Yè the precise nature of the Wū is, in his own words, "indistinct."

As I and others before me have argued,[225] the Wū, or Spirit-mediums, imparted a formative influence on the development of Ritual Method traditions, and when cognizant of the specific nature of the Wū, their performance methods, iconography, and religious contexts, their influences can be identified and understood. But because Professor Yè uses the term Wū in a way that is fundamentally tautological (the Wū are those who practice a "Wū ritual method" 巫法 and a "Wū religion"巫教). Aside from the names of deities, he never identifies specific elements –historical, ritual, or performative– that could otherwise substantiate arguments linking the medieval Wū with later Ritual Master traditions.

An illustrative example of dubious interpretation arising from vague usages of the term Wū and its cognates is to be found in the works of the influential Taiwanese scholar and prolific author Xiè Zōngróng 謝宗榮, whose many books and college textbooks on traditional Taiwanese religion have reached a wide readership. In one of his general surveys entitled *Traditional Taiwanese*

[224] Ibid.,153.
[225] Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*; Andersen, "Tianxin Zhengfa 天心正法," EOT, 991.

Religious Culture 台灣傳統宗教文化,[226] Xiè proposes two different classification schemes for understanding Taiwanese religion, both of which use the terms Wū or Wū-arts 巫術 to designate categories meant to reflect the divisions or relationships among diverse forms of "belief" 信仰 in traditional Taiwanese religion.

The first of these two schemes is in fact adopted by Xiè from the Taiwanese anthropologist Lín Meǐróng 林美容,[227] who proposes that in Táiwān there are "at least three different kinds of popular religion" which she defines, in order as "popular public cults"民間公共祭祀, "popular sects" 民間教派 (i.e. Sectarian groups), and "popular Wū-arts belief"民間巫術信仰. Xiè declares this scheme to be "extremely fitting," and goes on to explain that while the first, "popular public cults," indicates territorial cultic organizations,[228] the second, "popular sects," are groups such as Yī Guàndào 一貫道 and other manifestations of the traditional "Vegetarian Teaching" 齋教 and Phoenix Halls 鸞堂, all of which are said to be characterized by "theology 教義, religious leaders 教主, group initiation ritual for members, and religious sect organization."[229] The third category, "popular Wū-arts beliefs" we are told,

> "indicates individual belief in ghosts and spirits, divination, Fēng-shuǐ, Spirit-mediums 乩童, and Wū-arts, all of which are beliefs related to seeking individual blessings or remedying individual difficulties, and exist especially in private temples 私廟 and private altars 私壇 which provide a non-public cultic space 非公眾性祭祀空間 for people seeking divination with spirits, requesting talismans, and the performance of ritual, with a small number [of such practices] also appearing in public temples, such as "Radiant Lanterns" 光明燈 and "Settling the Great Year [Star]" 安太歲, as well as in popular sects with such practices as

[226] Xiè Zōngróng 謝宗榮,《台灣傳統宗教文化》(臺北市: 知己總經銷 , 2003 [民 92]).
[227] Ibid.,15. Cited from Lín Meǐróng 林美容,《台灣人的社會與信仰》(台北: 自立晚報文化出版部, 1993), 8.
[228] Here interpreted in Lín Meǐróng's concepts of the "cultic circle" 祭祀圈 and "belief circle" 信仰圈.
[229] Xiè,《台灣傳統宗教文化》, 16.

> working the planchette 扶乩 and working the phoenix 扶鸞. One can say that "popular Wū-arts belief" is a kind of individual-oriented ritual system and knowledge system for seeking wealth, seeking peace-and-safety, and avoiding disasters."[230]

Next, Xiè then reports that according to Lín Meǐróng, "of these three kinds of popular religion or popular belief...the first ["popular public cults"] and the third ["popular Wū-arts belief"] are called "popular belief" 民間信仰, whereas the second category ["popular sects"] is called "popular religion" 民間宗教." With this curious splitting of the putative "popular belief" duly noted, Xiè continues by emphasizing that only the

> "popular public cult is the core of popular belief 民間信仰, which is to say that only in collective worship is the reason for the origin and development of popular belief found, as Taiwanese people utilize popular public cultic sacrifice to express their local identity and sense of regional solidarity. However, "popular Wū-arts belief" is merely an appendage to popular belief, it is secondary and peripheral, and is only to permit the satisfaction of individual's worldly needs outside of the group, and nothing more.
> 民間公共祭祀是民間信仰的核心，也就是說，集體性的崇拜才是民間信仰源起、發展的意義所在，台灣本地人藉著民間公共祭祀，表達其社區意識與地域人群的一體感。而「民間巫術信仰」只是民間信仰所附帶的、次要的、邊緣的，在群體之外容許個人需求滿足的世俗作用而已。

What this proposed scheme, promoted by two major Taiwanese scholars, would have readers believe is that local temples of the Common Religion with territorial precincts and sizeable community participation are so categorically different from supposedly smaller, private temples and altars that the latter should be given a separate and "peripheral" category, as the "individual-oriented" practices involving "belief in ghosts and spirits, divination, Fēng-shuǐ, Spirit-mediums, and Wū-arts" are but a "secondary..appendage" to the primary "core" of collective sacrifice, with

[230] Ibid..

only "a small number" of supposedly Wū-arts-related practices intruding upon the otherwise distinct realm of large community temples.

Undoubtedly, it is to underscore the alleged difference, or separability between these two kinds of "popular belief" that the unrelated phenomenon of Sectarian groups has been inserted between them (as number 2 in the line-up), so as to distance this unseemly domain of Spirit-mediums and rites "for worldly gain" from an idylic realm of community sacrifice and local religious identity. Having excised these divinatory and mediumistic practices from the what these scholars identify as the genuine basis of traditional Taiwanese religion, Xiè goes on to explicitly affirm that he will only be discussing the legitimate and proper realm of "collective sacrifice," as "this kind of popular belief, which takes collective cultic sacrifice as its main [factor], is also the religious belief universally handed down by ethnic Hàn peoples of Táiwān."[231]

In other words, these authors assert that Spirit-mediums – here only by general association placed within the "Wū-arts" – are a peripheral and secondary manifestation within the traditional religion practiced by Fujianese (and other) immigrants who settled in Táiwān, and that furthermore, larger community temples are somehow devoid of these "Wū-arts", with only a small number of exceptions, like "Brilliance Lanterns".

This scheme and its premises are nothing less than a sweeping and agenda-laden distortion of the traditional religious culture in Táiwān. In point of fact, the supposedly smaller temples and altars dismissively labeled under "popular Wū-arts belief" primarily differ from larger community temples in size only, or in their relative newness compared to the larger and older temples from which most have taken their gods' incense fire. Not only are these two supposedly distinct realms

[231] Ibid.,17.

they the same in terms of cultic structure, content, ideology, and worship, most are likewise linked through precinct alliances and ritual processions, in addition to genealogical relationships of Division of Incense 分香(or, Division of Spirit 分靈). Moreover, the vast majority of larger, older community temples, of rurual, suburban, and urban settings, of course have Spirit-mediums, spirit-writing sessions, and a whole range of "individual-oriented" services on offer. In the Táinán region, while temples with various forms of spirit-writing but no Spirit-mediums may equal or slightly exceed those with active Spirit-mediums, in many cases this often has more to do with the failure to find a replacement for an older Spirit-medium. From Ānpíng through the rural townships of southern Táiwān, virtually every temple larger than an Earth God shrine has at least one Spirit-medium. To claim some fundamental difference between older, larger temples and smaller "Spirit-altars" 神壇, especially based on the factors these authors identify, is simply untenable, and raises the question whether these scholars have ever seriously observed any "larger" public community temples (outside Táiběi and other metropolises) at any time other than their annual or periodic "grand worship" 大拜拜 ceremonies. What do these scholars think happens in these "popular public cult" temples on a daily and weekly basis? Most hold spirit-writing and Spirit-medium sessions to help worshippers solve personal issues.

Clearly, this approach is meant to sanitize the Taiwanese Common Religion by arguing those aspects which educated, urban Taiwanese might find unappealing –bleeding Spirit-mediums, long, smoky rituals for the removal of affliction, tattooed youth with betel-nut-stained teeth– these are all extraneous, peripheral, and even alien encrustations clinging to a more genteel, authentic, and sympathetic "core" of community festivals and group worship. Tellingly, it is in this context of isolating a putative "orthodoxy" of positive and authentic religion that the term Wū is

employed, and in a way highly reminiscent of the 1915 *Outline of Old Customs*, in which the term Wū-xí is defined as a "collective term" 總稱 for practitioners of "heterodox arts" 邪術. In other words, in these authors' usage, there is little that is historically specific about the term Wū (or Wū-arts) and its intended referents here. Rather, it is simply used as a vague pejorative label, whose arbitrary parameters are broadly drawn to accommodate dubious and ill-defined value-judgements.

In this way Xiè Zōngróng and Lín Meǐróng's approach is not unlike that of many late imperial literati, who sought to "superscribe" the values of the scholar-gentry onto the Common Religion, and who deemed the more muscular and ecstatic aspects of the religious culture to be inferior, uncivilized, and ultimately mere "superstition," and not true "religion," a distinction still embodied in the label "popular belief," which specifically denies the status of "religion" to these local cults.

But Xiè Zōngróng has his own scheme for categorizing the temples of Taiwanese "popular belief," in which he employs the term Wū in ways that demonstrate how the concrete historical meanings of the term are by no means clear to scholars whose first languages are Chinese. Xiè proposes that temples can be divided into five categories, "according to their main orientations," these five being: 1) " Belief of nature-worship," 自然崇拜的信仰, 2) "Belief of a Wū-arts-nature" 巫術性的信仰 [or, perhaps "Wū-ist belief", 3) "Daoist-influenced belief" 道教化的信仰, aka "folk Daoism" 通俗道教,[232] 4) "Buddhist-influenced belief 佛教化的信仰, aka "folk Buddhism" 通俗佛

[232] It should be noted that in terms of "Daoist-influenced belief", Xiè is in no way pointing toward what other scholars have identified as a "Daoist ritual framework", but rather merely claims, without specific illustration, that many temples have passively "absorbed" Daoist influence. What this actually amounts to is never intimated, and evidently does not extend to the other "Buddhist-influenced" temples and so forth. Nor, in his other textbook articles (does Xiè Zōngróng ever mention any relationship of any kind whatsoever between Daoism and what he terms "popular belief." See 謝宗榮，「臺灣道教的傳承與發展」，「臺灣道教的齋醮

教, and 5) Confucian-influenced belief 儒教化的信仰.[233] Tellingly, most of these categories reflect a top-down conception of religious "influence," in which only more elite and textually-oriented traditions exert influence, which local cults passively absorb.

Of these, Xiè states that the first two, "Nature-worship belief" and "Belief of a Wū-arts nature" are the "most ubiquitous." The "nature-worship" temples are particularly numerous, he tells us, because this category mainly includes temples of "Lord-of-Heaven belief 天公信仰, Earth-god belief 土地神信仰, Stone-Duke belief 石頭公信仰 and Big-Tree-Duke belief 大樹公信仰."[234] Let us leave aside for the moment Xiè's conflation of temples to the Jade Emperor, aka the Lord-of-Heaven –which are patterned on the Daoist Jiào altar –with the worship of sacred rocks and trees, and move on to temples of the "Wū-ist" variety. These, we read, "aside from widely-distributed spirit-altars 神壇" mentioned above also include local temples to "The Efficacious Duke" 有應公 and similar temples known as "Sire of the Great Multitude" 大眾爺, Sire of the Righteous People 義民爺, Sire of a Myriad Boons 萬善爺, and 'Lady belief' 姑娘信仰, *all of which possess a Wū-arts nature* 都具有巫術的性質" (emphasis added).[235]

The author further explains that temples of this "Wū-ist" category are mostly devoted to the worship of "Yīn spirits" 陰神, which is to say, orphan spirits of the dead, and though the author makes no mention of this fact, these temples were often built on sites where corpses (especially of

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科儀」，「臺灣道教的祀神」，在於《臺灣本土宗教信仰》, ed. Wú Yǒngmèng 吳永猛 (臺北縣：空中大學，民 97 [2008])，17-161.

[233] Xiè Zōngróng 謝宗榮,《台灣傳統宗教文化》, 17.

[234] Ibid.,19.

[235] Ibid.. In the caption to an accompanying photo of the exterior archway to the "Sire Big-elder" 老大公 in Jīlóng, also a temple for ghosts, which were often built where corpses were found, Xiè adds that the temple, indistinguishable from any other kind of temple "possesses a strong coloration of Wū-arts belief" 具有濃厚的巫術信仰色彩. (18). Again, what this might actually mean goes unspecified.

those violently killed) were discovered, unearthed, or buried. In ordinary parlance, these are considered "Yīn temples" 陰廟, or "Dark temples," as the ghosts worshipped in them are seen as categorically different from the "Bright spirits" 神明 worshipped in most regular temples, such distinction being all the more important for the significant continuity and ambiguity between these two classes of deified dead. As Xiè points out, these Dark temples are established in order to placate these dangerous Yīn spirits of the unquiet dead. Among the many important points left out of Xiè's presentation here is the fact that Yīn or Dark temples are with but few exceptions generally seen as potentially dangerous, but also potentially more efficacious, particularly regarding get rich quick enterprises or other "improper" 不正當 requests. But such Dark spirits demand repayment for their response, and when displeased by inadequate or tardy repayment are believed to inflict disaster upon those who fail to keep their end of the bargain.

The fact that Xiè repeatedly asserts such Yīn or Dark temples "possess a Wū-arts nature" reveals that he is using the term "Wū-arts" in a way totally divorced from any demonstrable grounding in historical or anthropological meaning, and is instead using the term in a way that is not merely arbitrary, but driven by an agenda to label that which is peripheral, "spooky," or even anti-social as "Wū-ist" in nature. In point of fact, these particular Yīn temples such as those dedicated to "The Efficacious Duke" 有應公 and the like *are the least likely to have Spirit-mediums, spirit-writing or Ritual Master ceremony of any type of temple connected with the Common Religion.* In other words, if we take the term Wū as available for use in the language because of its historical and literary role referring to ritual experts called Wū, be they Spirit-mediums, Ritual Masters, or in reference to other forms of spiritistic communication, these same Dark or Yīn

temples are *by far and away the least connected with any Wū-ist activity of any temples in the religious nexus*.

Not surprisingly, Xiè is never able to specify what exactly constitutes the "strong tint of Wū-arts" he claims these Yīn temples possess. Though Xiè does not make this point himself, we might infer that since he attempted to link his putative "Wū-arts" with the pursuit of individual worldly gains, the fact that people often seek financial, speculative, or competitive advantage in such Yīn temples, perhaps at some level this orientation toward the pursuit of wealth and short-term benefit suggested a link between his concept of an anti-social Wū-arts and these Yīn temples. But since Xiè never specifically identifies any traits which lend these temples their supposedly "strong Wū-arts coloration," this potential, though still questionable connection can only be offered as speculation.

From both of the schemes put forward in this widely distributed, full-color book on Taiwanese religion, we see that influential Taiwanese scholars have used the term Wū and its derivatives in ways completely disconnected from any clear, historically or anthropologically justified meaning, and instead employ such vocabulary as part of a value-laden and unempirical agenda to vaguely label practices and religious institutions that these authors deem to be marginal or undesirable.

The fact Chinese historical literature uses the term Wū and its various compounds to primarily indicate Spirit-mediums, and later, Ritual Masters, is simply not apparent to these scholars, who only include Spirit-mediums as the fourth and final item listed in their "Wū-arts" category, behind such phenomenon as the belief in ghosts and spirits, divination, and Fēng-shuǐ, while further connecting their Wū-arts category to the relatively recent practice of sponsoring

"Brilliance Lamps" 光明燈 in temples, which of course have nothing whatsoever to do with Spirit-mediums, Ritual Masters, spirit-writing, or anything concretely connected with the phenomena labeled as Wū in historical sources. The dubious claims presented by these scholars can in part be traced to an insufficiently clear grasp of the historical sources, as well as to methodological factors which tend to insulate their theories from critical scrutiny, and preclude the formation of more empirically sound alternatives.[236]

Difficulties adhering to this term "Wū-arts" 巫術 are likewise found in the 2004 work of Chinese Scholar Liú Lìmíng 劉黎明 entitled *Research into Sòng Dynasty Popular Wū-arts* 宋代民間巫術研究, in which the author, from the opening line of his study, equates the term Wū-arts with the Western anthropological discourse of magic.[237] On page one he offers a quote from (a Chinese translation of) Malinowski, which states that "Magic 巫術 is universally practiced, and satisfies a common human need."[238] Where he offers a definition of Wū-arts, he cites the *Encyclopedia of Religion* entry for magic in which the term "Wū-master" 巫師 is presented as a translation, presumably, for "magician."[239] Further citations to Freud and other (dated) Western studies of magic follow.

Clearly, theories of magic as both a human universal and an anthropological topic are highly relevant to particular aspects of Chinese religion and ritual, and though Liú should be

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[236] While the organizational schemes put forward in this and other texts by the same authors have been taught to countless thousands of university and postgraduate students in Táiwān, to the best of my knowledge they have never been challenged or shown to be problematic by other scholars in the field.

[237] Liú Lìmíng 劉黎明,《宋代民間巫術研究》(成都：巴蜀書社，2004), 1.

[238] Ibid. As the Chinese translation 《文化論》(p.51) he cites differs somewhat from what is presumably the original, *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays*, I am unable to locate the original passage, the quote closely echoes statements found in the commencement of Malinowski's more famous work on the subject, *Magic, Science, and Religion* (1948).

[239] Liú,《宋代民間巫術研究》,10.

commended for attempting a more broadly comparative and theoretically informed study of Sòng dynasty religion, in his subsequent discussion of "Appellations of Sòng dynasty Popular Wū-masters" 宋代民間巫師的稱呼, Liú applies his terminology of "Wū-master" 巫師 and "Wū-arts" 巫術 to subjects whom original sources do not call Wū, but are rather labeled as "Fiendish man" 妖人 and "Fiendish bandits" 妖賊, with these then mixed together with other figures whom sources do in fact label as "Licentious Wū" 姦巫, "Master Wū" 師巫, Wū-xí 巫覡, and Wū.[240] Interestingly, Liú also lists the Ritual Officer 法官 among these Sòng dynasty "magicians," not because his source[241] identifies the Ritual Officer as a Wū, but because his definition of magic also encompasses "practitioners of ritual arts" 行法術者.

While Liú Lìmíng's study presents a wealth of informative sources which in themselves make reading his work worthwhile, his discussion is seriously impeded by the conflation of diverse Chinese terms and ritual experts with a Western discourse of magic. Not unlike the enduring fixation on "shamanism" as a deceptive, pseudo-explanatory label, Liú appears to have been led by a kind of linguistic sleight-of-hand produced by Chinese translations of "magic" and "magician" into the terms Wū-arts and Wū-Master respectively. In this way, the specific, indigenous contexts of these various Wū are again rendered opaque by the imposition of an interpretive framework drawn not from a close reading of the Chinese sources themselves, but from the uncritical adoption of a theoretical discourse that sprang from entirely different religious and historical contexts.[242] Thus distracted by the language of magic, it does not occur to Liú that in sources of the Sòng period,

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[240] Ibid., 33-4.
[241] The *Húhaǐ Xīnwén Yíjiān Xùzhì* 湖海新聞夷堅續志 j.2,「狐精媚人」, Liú《宋代民間巫術研究》35.
[242] For a critical examination of the development of western concepts of magic, including anthropological and historiographic theory see StanleyTambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

the term Wū and its cognates primarily refer to Spirit-mediums and/or Ritual Masters, even while copious anecdotes depicting them appear throughout his study.

By far, the identification of Wū as shamans has had the most extensive and consequential impact on scholarship, in both the English-language world, where this usage somewhat arbitrarily began, and in that of Chinese-language studies, where many scholars have adopted this discourse of shamanism. No scholar better exemplifies this direction than the Taiwanese researcher Lín Fùshì 林富士, whose numerous writings on the subject have consistently championed the term shaman as a translation of Wū, while directly adopting themes and concepts from the study of shamanism to explain both the Wū in general and Taiwanese Spirit-mediums 乩童 in particular.

In his 2005 article "Healer or Patient: the Role and Shape of Dāng-geê 童乩 in Taiwanese Society" 「醫者或病人——童乩在臺灣社會中的角色與形象」,[243] Lín Fùshì presents a wide range of sources, from many of the same Taiwanese gazetteers examined above to studies in psychotherapy and even the pronouncements of Christian missionaries all in order to portray Taiwanese Spirit-mediums as "wounded healers," and therefore in conformity with this classic image of shamans as undergoing a crisis or illness which their initiation into shamanism then resolves. Toward this end, Lín attempts to link the concept of "what anthropologists call 'shamanic illness" 人類學家所謂的『巫病』[244] with the claim that "[a]ccording to data derived from the latest fieldwork, illness plays a very important role in shamanistic initiation in Taiwan." However, the data which Lín cites in his paper in fact gives a different story, and does not broadly support the notion that a significant proportion of Taiwanese Spirit-mediums have been impelled, as it

[243] Lín Fùshì 林富士，「醫者或病人——童乩在臺灣社會中的角色與形象」，《中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊》，第七十六本，第三分,(民 94 年 9 月): 511-568.
[244] Lín,「醫者或病人」, 532.

were, by disease or crisis toward becoming Spirit-mediums. Hence, while his data forces him to admit that "by no means has every shaman experienced fall[ing] sick," to compensate for this inconvenient divergence between Taiwanese Spirit-mediums and the narrative of classical shamanism, Lín then expands the concept of "shamanic illness" to include social disadvantage and personal hardship, arguing that

> "shamans are very easily categorized as sick or abnormal in social or cultural terms...Furthermore, most shamans indeed endure many hardships in life...are frequently weary in body and mind, and live in poverty...Nevertheless, just like shamans in other parts of the world, the experience of failure, trauma, or suffering *is inevitable* in the process of Taiwanese shamans. But during the process of self-healing (or receiving divine healing), they also acquire the capacity of healing others. This is the reason why some people call them 'wounded healers.'" (emphasis added)[245]

To his credit, Lín begins his article by defining the Taiwanese term d̄ang-geê 童乩[246] as a kind of ritual expert who "causes ghosts and spirits to descend and attach to their bodies, whereby they may speak" 令鬼神降附於身而口談.[247] In other words, they are Spirit-mediums. Moreover, Lín further clarifies that in Chinese historical literature, these same Spirit-mediums (whom he consistently calls shamans in all of his English writings) are called Wū and Wū-xí, and that this same Wū label was also used to indicate Ritual Masters and "Puppet-Aunties" 尪姨, though he also claims, without citing any examples, that "even Daoist priests have been conflated into this heading." Oddly, Lín turns to Liú Zhīwàn's article "Shamans of Táiwān"[248] for authoritative

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[245] Lín,「醫者或病人」, 568 (quoted from the English abstract at the end of the article).
[246] Which Lín romanizes as 'dang-gi', thus also rejecting, as I do, the phonetically incorrect "tang-ki" transcription used by both the MOE Taiwanese romanization scheme, as well as the older and equally odious Church Romanization script. In both of these systems, virtually every consonant and many vowels are given an indefensibly inaccurate romanization value.
[247] Lín,「醫者或病人」, 514.
[248] Liú Zhīwàn,「臺灣之 Shamanism」,《臺灣文獻》, 第五十四卷, 第二期 (2003):1-32.

support to the notion that the Puppet-Aunties can "be seen as a kind of đang-geê"[249] (i.e. Spirit-medium) as both "cause spirits to descend" 降神. But aside from his general observation, Lín never speculates as to why Ritual Masters might have been labeled as Wū by late imperial Chinese authors.

After presenting excerpts from Qīng and Japanese-era sources, as well as 20th C. ethnography to establish that these Wū functioned as healers, Lín then begins introducing modern writings with a strong psychological orientation which variously attempt to explain phenomena of spirit-possession and shamanism as expressions of "hysterical disassociation" and "personality dissociation," often linked with "high suggestibility."[250] While many examples featuring such psychotherapeutic vocabulary are repeated at length, Lín offers what he takes to be a contrary position stated by Liú Zhīwàn, who, reflecting indigenous, emic attitudes toward spirit-mediumship, argues that Spirit-mediums possess "a prerequisite condition" 前提條件 whereby they are "endowed with an innate capacity to easily accept possession by spirits" 賦有易受神靈憑附之先天秉性者.[251] While Lín believes that such a perspective contrasts with the prevailing view presented in his chapter, whereby Spirit-mediums ("shamans") are subject to "personal dissociation" 人格解離, in fact Liú Zhīwàn's interpretation not only transfers the premises of the religious

[249] Though he parenthetically references "Drawing out the Deceased" 牽亡 in connection with the Puppet-Aunties, and mentions that the Puppet-Aunties differ both in name and in their precise ritual function from the đang-geê of his paper's title, Lín fails to make the simple clarification that historically, the majority of Puppet-Aunties 尪姨 were primarily mediums for spirits of the dead (though often with their own patron deities), while the đang-geê 童乩 are mediums of temple deities, and that the distinctions between the two are structural, and linked to the distinctions between ancestors and gods 神明. It may be that in fixating on "shamanism" rather than spirit-mediumship, since the subject of spirit-possession is key in this distinction, the methodology of shamanism may have obscured the contours of this important division of labor.

[250] Lín,「醫者或病人」, 537-8.

[251] Ibid., citing Liú,「臺灣之 Shamanism」, 9.

culture itself into an analytic guise, an "innate capacity for spirit-possession" constitutes yet another attempt to locate the phenomenon within the interior nature of the individual, prior to and independent of their acculturation. In other words, like the entire quest for some form of psychological disorder, identifiable psychic state, or "shamanic illness", this "innate capacity" thesis also seeks to understand the phenomenon of spirit-possession in terms of the individual's inner makeup and private experience.

Next, Lín presents a series of twenty-three cases drawn from one field study of Taiwanese Spirit-mediums in the Sānchóng 三重 region of Táiběi [252] which he argues offer cases of "shamanic illness" as precipitating causes behind these individuals' career into serving as Spirit-mediums. But then Lín presents the results of another, broader survey of 596 Spirit-mediums from across Táiwān in which "15.6%" were found to have experienced something deemed akin to "shamanic illness," while another, much smaller study of the Xīnzhuàng 新莊 region of (then) Táiběi County found that 24% of the Spirit-mediums surveyed experienced illnesses or other physical ailments which Lín argues constitute cases of "shamanic illness."[253] In the first study from which his twenty-three cases were drawn, these represent 16.5% of the sample of seventy-two Spirit-mediums interviewed.

Thus, by Lín's own data, somewhere between 15% and 25% of the Spirit-mediums surveyed reported some type of physical or psychosomatic ailment which satisfied Lín's criteria for constituting "shamanic illness." This of course means that *seventy-five to eighty-five percent did not*. To compensate for this inconvenient ratio, Lín then proceeds to portray Spirit-mediums in 20th C. Táiwān as living "a life of 'hardship'" 「艱苦」的生活, and so where these survey participants

[252] Wáng Wénlíng 王雯鈴, 《臺灣童乩的成乩歷程：以三重童乩為主的初步考察》, 臺北：私立輔仁大學宗教學研究所碩士論文, 2004.
[253] Lín, 「醫者或病人」, 548.

additionally reported that they or their relatives experienced stresses, setbacks, and pressures of life, Lín added these responses to the statistics concerning "shamanic illness" so that the combined totals escalate to 48% (in the Xīnzhùang study) and 40% (in the Sānchóng study). Having portrayed modern Spirit-mediums as a "'disadvantaged' social group" 「弱勢」族群, Lín concludes that since many "shamans" found self-(or divine) healing through their initiation process, these statistics, and his extended presentation of writings by psychologically-oriented researchers and even Christian missionaries together justify why "some people have called them 'wounded healers.'"[254]

While such cases as Lín cites deserve study and analysis, such analysis should be proportionate. Moreover, researchers should be prepared to accept findings which contradict, modify, or refute their initial hypotheses, and be prepared to reformulate hypotheses and explanations which fit, rather than contradict, the evidence at hand. Here, even when additional factors such as the death of parents and joblessness have been added to the count (and thus accepted as causes and not mere correlation), still a majority of the Spirit-mediums surveyed did not report the kinds of setbacks, crises, and maladies that Lín argues form a definitive factor in the careers of Taiwanese Spirit-mediums, and the very phenomenon of "shamanism" itself.

On its face, Lín's argument is simply not persuasive. If only 15-25% of the Spirit-mediums surveyed experienced some form of physical or psychosomatic ailment deemed similar to "shamanic illness," then *what about the other 75-85 percent who did not?* Should not the experiences and contexts of the overwhelming majority be considered as pertinent to understanding the phenomenon? Or the 50-60% who likewise did not report some additional life crisis? Lín's entire

[254] Lín,「醫者或病人」, 552.

study, which encapsulates his career-spanning approach to understanding Chinese Wū as "shamans," epitomizes the serious drawbacks built into the discourse of "shamanism" when applied to Chinese and Taiwanese Spirit-mediums –and the historic Wū in general.

Under this framework of shamanism, not only is a highly social phenomenon forced into the fruitless and unempirical realm of psychology and private, individual experience, Lín's study demonstrates how a scholar deeply invested in the assumption that Spirit-mediums are shamans has allowed the premises and assumptions built into the paradigm of shamanism to completely shape his entire approach and analysis –and ultimately to determine his conclusions, even where his own evidence casts doubt on the utility of shamanism and shamanic illness as a useful framework and definitive paradigm. Rather than accept the challenge to rethink the subject, or formulate a more nuanced interpretation, however, Lín instead doubles down on the shamanic illness explanation by attempting to portray modern Taiwanese Spirit-mediums as experiencing a kind of generalized, socio-economic "shamanic illness," into which every vicissitude of human existence is regarded as proof of how concepts from the study of shamanism can explain and indeed define Taiwanese Spirit-mediums.

The problem with this entire method of approach, which seeks to explain these phenomena through psychological answers, and which consistently features a vocabulary of "personal dissociation," "hysteria," and "suggestibility," or which takes such forms as Liú Zhīwàn's reification of the religionists' own conception of spirit-possession as an "innate gift," all such theorizing serves to locate the main crux of the phenomenon within the realm of interior, mental states and innate individual dispositions. This entire line of inquiry would have us believe that people become Spirit-mediums and experience spirit-possession (and shamanic trance, etc.) because of psychological

conditions, their innate constitution, or their personal, psychic responses to life-crises. In other words, the most important dimension of the phenomenon which can explain why and how it happens the way it does is moved into the private realm of the individual's mind, and linked with the alleged stressors, fissures, pre-existing conditions, and irregularities of their minds, which then produce the "irregular" 異常[255] psychic states of possession and shamanic trance.

This entire approach is not only fruitless in its unempirical direction, it is completely misguided and unnecessary. We need not appeal to the interior makeup of the individual to account for Spirit-mediumship, as the important dimensions of the phenomenon are every bit as available to observation as the Spirit-medium's performance. Simply stated, Spirit-mediumship is a learned phenomenon. It does not originate in some interior, psychological condition, but enters through the senses as part of an individual's acculturation and life experience. The concept of what a Sprit-medium is, how they act, what they do, and how they look is acquired through social experience. Like most aspects of culture, including one's native language, this experience typically begins in childhood and continues through to the point where, for a variety of reasons, people feel themselves "called" or simply choose to become Spirit-mediums, at which point they must still undergo a period of training in order to learn how to be a Spirit-medium. It is a learned phenomenon, and this process of learning begins in a general way from childhood, intensifies as people spend more time around Spirit-mediums (usually as active members of a temple or altar-group), and this learning process is then greatly intensified yet again when they undergo formal training as a Spirit-medium, where they learn –to the satisfaction of others– that they can, while

[255] A quick glance reveals that the term "irregular," as describing the mental state of the possessed Sprit-medium appears throughout Lín's paper, e.g. Lín,「醫者或病人」, 540, 544, 545.

manifesting the presence of the god, conform with the range of behavior which is deemed authentic, and which people are familiar with.

It is in this highly social and rather open setting that researchers may observe and understand the phenomenon of spirit-possession, as in fact it is precisely in this same rather open, social setting which acculturated Taiwanese, active temple members, and Spirit-mediums themselves experience, practice, and reproduce the phenomenon of spirit-possession.

Moreover, another extremely important point which is completely overlooked by advocates of shamanic, psychological, and "innate predisposition" type theories is that being a Spirit-medium is not an individual enterprise; rather, it is a team sport, and the other supporting participants must also be trained in how to act, move, and engage with the Spirit-medium. Without these other trained participants, no Taiwanese, Mínnán-style Spirit-medium could perform. Of these supporting team members, the best known is of course the "Head-of-the-Table" 桌頭 (dùh taú) who in essence translates or interprets the speech and writing of the Spirit-medium (or spirit-writing via four-man sedan chair or "Little Hand Sedan" 手轎仔, etc.). In most but not all cases, it is the Ritual Master who serves as Head-of-the-Table, and the ability to understand the speech of specific mediums –which often reflects particular styles transmitted within altar-traditions– requires long exposure, as well as tutelage under older Heads-of-Tables.

Then the Spirit-medium must be tended and assisted by other group-members, who must learn a range of formal gestures and phrases that must be performed in the unfolding flow of the Spirit-medium's performance. Such tasks include observing and recognizing the process whereby their altar's Spirit-mediums enter trance; this sometimes involves two people picking up a semi-entranced medium and placing them on the formal stool on which they ideally sit to receive the

deity; then when the deity has descended and full possession-performance commences, depending on specific altar traditions, there are a series of formal procedures which follow: kneeling to offer the god/medium incense, wiping the Spirit-medium's nose and face if his nose or mouth have dripped during the process of entering trance, guiding the Spirit-medium to rise from their seat and then walk to where they will sit for consultation, and so on.[256] In many altar-traditions, each of these steps, up to the act of offering the god/medium their seat, all involve a spoken formula announcing to the god what is being done, including the announcement of continued offerings of incense or other actions throughout the session. Temple assistants must also recognize and respond to the gestures which the god/medium makes, from raised arms to remove their shirt, to a single raised hand beckoning for a weapon or incense, and so on.

While Spirit-mediums must undergo a protracted training process, their assistants must also gradually learn through observation, coaching, and practice. As a form of living culture, everything in and involving the temple must be learned and handed down, including the entire, collective enterprise of Spirit-medium performance. Hence in addition to training Spirit-mediums (as well as Minor Rite troupe members, workers of the hand-sedan spirit-writing device, and sedan carrying-team members, etc.), new assistants to the Spirit-medium must also be trained in how to manage a host of actions and skills, all of which are absolutely essential to Spirit-medium performance.

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[256] Virtually never does a Spirit-medium enter trance sitting on the same stool or seat where they then hold consultation, thus movement from one seat to another is an essential fixture of the practice. Depending on the specific altar-tradition, the Spirit-medium tends to enter trance or transition into full possession on a bench or stool to one side of the temple's central axis, and farther out from the central altar-table, while the consultation given by the god/medium is always given while sitting at a stool located on the central axis at the head of the altar-table, so that the Spirit-medium faces in toward the spirit-images on the altar. These spatial relationships appear to reflect the ritually-circumscribed transformation of the human medium into the deity. Thus movement from the first to the second seat is an intrinsic and vital aspect to the

Among the dozen Spirit-mediums that I have observed very closely for extended numbers of years, none of them were compelled by misfortune, affliction, or illness into becoming Spirit-mediums. Essentially all of them, in their own ways, said they felt drawn to doing it, or believed they felt a particular affinity with their deity, or stepped in to fill a need in the temple community when an older Spirit-medium could no longer perform. In the case of the Wǔdé Gōng 伍德宮 in Ānpíng, the mediumship of Sū 蘇 Wángye was passed from father to son.

Dean and Zheng (1993/2010) have documented collective training of Spirit-mediums in different parts of the Pǔtián region in which most new Spirit-mediums are drawn from groups of youths initially selected by the community or the "altar association" 壇班 responsible for their training, with finalists for training determined by whether or not they dream of the deities while sequestered in the temple.[257] However, in "the southern irrigated plain" of Pǔtián, the authors report, "mediums are mostly 'self-selected', and engage most commonly in spirit writing and individual trance."[258]

In a Pénghú-derived temple in Táinán County, the Chìfàntáo Gōng 赤樊桃宮, the Spirit-medium there once offered to teach me how to be a Spirit-medium. I demurred by saying I didn't think I had "the right constitution". He responded by saying this was immaterial, and plainly stated that "anyone can do it." To him, it was clear the entire practice was a learned phenomenon, and having learned it, he was willing and able to teach it.

As to the charge that Spirit-mediums constitute a "disadvantaged group," and face social disapproval, charges of superstition and backwardness, low education, and other socially

[257] Dean and Zheng, *Ritual Alliances*, 160.
[258] Ibid., 38.

marginalizing factors which Lín Fùshì cites,[259] several points need to be made. First, all of the Spirit-mediums that I am familiar with have similar kinds of jobs in industrial trades and small-scale enterprises as most other active temple members. Some, however, like the Pénghú native who offered to teach me, are entrepreneurs, and in his case co-owns a small factory in the industrialized suburbs. Though when viewed relative to the entire, urbanized, and increasingly well-educated society, most Spirit-mediums probably do fall into the ranks of those with less education, and are thus primarily members of the broad, blue-collar working class. But this should not be taken to mean that people with such a class background are so downtrodden that they take refuge in spirit-possession as an opiate for their life of hardship, even if in certain cases a connection can be made to life-crises and the succor of the gods. For that matter, conversion to Christianity in a society like Táiwān could likely also be correlated with family problems or other hardships in similar proportions to Lín's data about Spirit-mediums.

More significantly, the view that Spirit-mediums are necessarily a low-status or despised group is among the more pervasive misconceptions circulated in scholarship on the subject, and as such reflects first, the status-conscious world of old-fashioned, Táiběi-native, Taiwanese scholars, and second, the lingering misconceptions regarding the Common Religion itself, which far too many scholars still have yet to acknowledge was and is the mainstream religion of society itself. When viewed relative to a surgeon, engineer, or professor in Taiwanese society, yes, a Spirit-medium would be generally regarded as occupying a much lower position on every register of socio-economic status. But this is not the most relevant consideration. In the lived experience of any given Spirit-medium, *their status is not determined by an absolute comparison with society as*

[259] Lín,「醫者或病人」, 551-2.

a whole, but relative to his or her own social world, which is primarily defined by his or her temple community.

First let us remember that the Spirit-medium is, together with the Ritual Master, *the primary ritual expert of the Common Religion*, the religion synonymous with traditional society. It is not a marginal position, but one of importance and influence, and toward which many people direct an enormous amount of reverence, trust, respect, and gratitude. In many temple communities, the person who serves as Spirit-medium is "Elder" 大个 (duāh-ei), a senior figure in the temple community who is respected for their skills and knowledge. To be sure, the position of Spirit-medium is often and rightly regarded as very taxing, and in some instances, certain faithful devotees might believe the onerous strains of Spirit-mediumship to be an unenviable fate. But in every case that I have observed up close and over prolonged periods, Spirit-mediums are either regular members of the altar-group "club" who hang out at the temple every day, or they are among if not *the* principle person making things happen in the temple. Hence the whole notion that Spirit-mediums constitute a disadvantaged, marginalized, or despised "group" is, I believe, a serious and compound misconception, one which arises in part from lingering misconceptions about the Common Religion as a whole, and moreover takes the social criteria of the elite (including the Táiběi-based researcher) as the standard, rather than the Sprit-medium's own social world of the temple community.

By these observations and throughout this study, I have sought to give Spirit-mediums their due as important ritual experts at the epicenter of the Common Religion. Where Mayfair Yang has sought to affirm the social and cultural legitimacy of contemporary Chinese Spirit-mediums, however, her approach, wedded to the mystique and pedigree of "shamanism," further

demonstrates how such an approach easily leads to unintended consequences. In her article "Shamanism and Spirit Possession in Chinese Modernity," Yang begins with a forceful argument seeking to equate spirit-possession with shamanism, which she translates into Chinese with the term Wū-arts 巫術, and then invokes the "innate capacity" thesis by defining "shamanism as a religious culture that revolves around certain gifted and respected holy men or women who have rare abilities to communicate with or be possessed by gods, spirits, or ancestors...travel to other worlds", and who are able to "heal the sick through dancing, singing, ritual performances, exorcizing demons, and divining the future."[260]

Next, Yang takes aim at what she believes to be an enduring affront to the traditions of these Chinese "shamans" –an intellectual delegitimization paralleled in her paper by ongoing state persecution– namely, the pronouncements of Mircea Eliade, whom Yang charges "dismisses spirit possession and denies that it is a 'true' form of shamanism." To redeem the validity of sprit-possession, Yang declares that "I follow other scholars who have shown that spirit possession is just as archaic and important as the spirit travel that Eliade privileges. Thus, I will use the terms 'shamanism' and 'spirit possession' interchangeably."[261] In a footnote to this declaration, Yang takes issue with how Eliade

> takes Central and North Asian shamanism as the model type of shamanism, and dismisses all other shamanic cultures around the world as derivative or 'aberrant' and 'decadent'...Eliade repeatedly elevates spirit travel or magical flight as the true form of shamanism, and downgrades spirit possession. However, I. M. Lewis (2003:44–50) finds that even among what Eliade claims to be the *locus classicus* of shamanism—the East Siberian Chuckchee, the Arctic Tungus, and the Eskimos—spirit possession and the calling of spirits into the body are quite common. Similarly,

[260] Maifair Yang, "Shamanism and Spirit Possession in Chinese Modernity: Some Preliminary Reflections on a Gendered Religiosity of the Body." *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 2 (2015): 52.
[261] Ibid., :52-3.

> Manduhai Buyandelger (2013:29) found in fieldwork among the Buryats of contemporary Mongolia that there was only spirit possession, and they were unfamiliar with shamans ascending to supernatural realms. Thus, we cannot presume a single original form of shamanism. It is best to see shamanisms past and present as having multiple cultural forms, some stressing spiritual travel, others focusing on spirit possession, some seeking the assistance or sacrifice of animals, others featuring trance, dance, and speaking in tongues, or ritual healing and exorcism, and the use of medicinal plants and ingestion of trance-inducing substances.

First, the sweeping conflation of different religious phenomena and different social and religious contexts implied in this assessment should be of concern to scholars who aim to bring cultural practices into sharper focus. But Yang's sources for this conflation, and the ways in which they are used here are also suspect. First, I.M Lewis' study seeks to locate spirit-possession within specific social, economic, and gendered contexts of hunting and semi-agrarian societies with regard to particular gender divisions and social relations, all of which are very far removed from the social and religious world of the Chinese Common Religion, and cannot be casually imposed on the Chinese context. But as one reviewer put is, Lewis' "arguments are marred by a lack of conceptual rigor," while his "[r]eductionist analytic conceptions of possession and shamanism" in particular are further questioned.[262] In addition, where Yang states that Manduhai Buyandelger found that "among the Buryats of contemporary Mongolia that there was only spirit possession, and they were unfamiliar with shamans ascending to supernatural realms," in fact what Buyandelger wrote was that due to the tremendous cultural dislocation wrought by post-Soviet modernization and the loss of tradition, shamanic practices had undergone substantial changes:

> Among different Mongol and Siberian groups…shamans claim to make journeys into the realm of the supernatural. But the Buryats of northeastern Mongolia *during the time of my research* were unfamiliar with the notion of the souls of

[262] Don Handelman, "Review: Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 74, No. 4 (Aug., 1972): 908-909. Davis (*Society and the Supernatural*,2) also disputes Lewis' conflation of spirit-possession and shamanism.

> shamans ascending to the supernatural realm. Only spirits travel through the landscape, paraphernalia, and the supernatural realm; the shaman's soul stays near his or her body. *It is possible that in centuries past Buryat shamans claimed that their souls ascended to the sky; origin spirits may now be more prominent than shaman's souls, since, on account of the disruption of shamanism and the absence of genealogical records, possession is often the only route whereby clients can be convinced of the spirits' existence.* (emphasis added)[263]

The actual nature of Buyandelger's comments thus paints a rather different picture than what Yang's citation implies. Much as the highly contextualized (if suspect) arguments of I. M. Lewis have been recruited –but stripped of their specific social and economic linkages, here too the relevant background, to which the original author was quite sensitive, has been omitted.

While the impressment of such manicured scholarship is problematic in and of itself, more puzzling still is Yang's basic stance. While she vehemently rejects Eliade's disparagement of spirit-possession as but "derivative" and "decadent," she in fact accepts Eliade's basic premise behind his demotion of spirit-possession, namely, that only "shamanism" represents a "true," "archaic," and "important" form of religion. Thus for Yang, to restore spirit-possession as a valid and true form of "archaic" religion, it must be counted as a form of shamanism. Shamanism is accepted as the gold standard, and for spirit-possession to reclaim its value, it must be equated with this benchmark form of human religiosity.

As a researcher with years of experience working closely with Spirit-mediums, and who believes Spirit-mediums deserve better recognition and understanding as (together with Ritual Masters) the primary ritual experts of the religion, this desire to base their legitimacy through the pedigree of "shamanism" strikes me as misplaced and counterproductive. Why not affirm the social

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[263] Manduhai Buyandelger, *Tragic Spirits: Shamanism, Memory, and Gender in Contemporary Mongolia*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013): 29.

and historical place of spirit-possession and Chinese Spirit-mediums in their own terms? Why do these have to be equated with shamanism to be taken seriously? And moreover, how does broadly conflating the practices of Chinese Spirit-mediums with those of Siberian and South American shamans help anyone understand their specific natures, contexts, and roles? If part of the problem stems from misunderstandings and biases toward the phenomenon of spirit-possession, why not address these directly, rather than tacitly affirming them by taking cover under the mantle of shamanism?

Yang's insightful and convincing analysis of gender in contemporary Chinese society, together with her compelling case studies would all be strengthened, I believe, if the background and interpretive framework employed were more clearly grounded in the historical religious culture, with its varyingly nested spheres of temple and domestic altars, rather than an amorphous and ahistorical "shamanism" of global, rather than regional and local parameters. For example, Yang asks, "Why has the religious authority of Buddhism and Daoism been accepted by the state in the post-Mao period, while that of shamanism is still vigorously excluded from legitimacy?"[264] In other words, in Yang's view it is "shamanism," and not the Chinese Common Religion of the region in question that has been denied acceptance and recognition. To be sure, the fact that the universal religious mode of society, like that of the Greeks and Romans, never had or needed a name is an enduring problem with no simple or entirely satisfactory solution, and this perennial problem is surely related to Yang's choice of vocabulary. Moreover, in most of mainland China, the destruction of the traditional religious ecology is and remains the largest single factor affecting virtually every aspect of religious practice, including the revival of certain elements, like the Spirit-

[264] Yang, "Shamanism and Spirit Possession," 69.

mediums in Yang's study. The disappearance of these historical cultic institutions and community customs is surely likewise an important reason why the Spirit-mediums examined here are regarded as a diffuse class of individuals, rather than as ritual experts functioning within the fabric of local religious culture.[265]

Clearly, foremost among Yang's objectives in this paper is to advocate for the recognition of these Spirit-mediums as expressions of an authentic and socially positive form of Chinese religiosity. To that end, she directly addresses the continuing suppression of Spirit-mediums in contemporary China, and offers a number of case studies to demonstrate their sincerity and generally positive role, while refuting the caricatures of Spirit-mediums as frauds and charlatans posed by crude stereotypes and anti-superstition propaganda. However, I would submit that much of the misunderstanding surrounding these Spirit-mediums and other aspects of traditional religion is connected to general misconceptions about the Common Religion itself, rather than "shamanism" or spirit-possession alone, and that better understanding of religious practitioners would best be achieved through promoting informed recognition of the overall traditional religion

[265] Issues of specific context at times deprive Yang's study of potentially important connections or lines of inquiry. For example, where one Spirit-medium is undergoing initiation and falls ill while developing her connection with Chén Jìnggū ("Shamanism and Spirit Possession," 62), this woman sought out a Fǎshī 法師, which Yang renders "Daoist healer." The fact that this is a Ritual Master, quite possibly with a cultic connection to Chén Jìnggū, goes unnoticed, even though he supplies the woman in question with talismans which helped cure her illness and stabilize her relationship with Chén Jìnggū. Likewise, the fact that most of the Spirit-mediums in her study are women, and are based in their own home altars rather than temples per se raises the distinct possibility that many of these mediums are more like a regional variety of the "Puppet-Aunty" type, as opposed to the predominantly male temple-mediums. In Táiwān at least, while genuine Puppet-Aunty type practitioners (complete with their rhythmic, lyric performance style) are an endangered tradition, one of the few which I have been able to observe also regarded Chén Jìnggū as her patron, and invoked Madame Chén 陳奶夫人 throughout her impressive performance as a kind of refrain. Thus, I suspect that the traditional distinctions among Fujianese and Taiwanese Spirit-mediums reported throughout the sources examined in this chapter likely had parallels in the neighboring Zhèjijiāng region which Yang studied, or at least the question should be explored. Hence, a clearer engagement with the historical religious culture might have brought important contours of Yang's subjects into view.

as a historical phenomenon. Identifying southeastern Chinese Spirit-mediums with a purported global tradition of "shamanism" is surely less salient and constructive than illuminating their specific, embedded contexts at the center of traditional Chinese religion.

Conclusion

The representative sample of scholarship examined here is meant to show how a range of substantial and unnecessary problems arise when the historical and literary discourse of the Wū is subjected to vague, tautological, or conflationary interpretations. Sources from the Sòng through the early 20th C. make it sufficiently clear that as a cultural phenomenon and literary construct, the terms Wū and Wū-xí orinally indicated Spirit-mediums, but that from the Sòng onward, this primary reference expanded to include the new figure of the Ritual Master, who often collaborated with Spirit-mediums, and sometimes closely resembled them as well.

In its basic outlines, this historical basis of the Wū as a cultural category was still apparent to early 20th C Japanese ethnographers in Táiwān, while techniques of spirit-writing, which often involved spirit-possessed sedan-chairs and the mediation of Ritual Masters, were also associated with the realm of the Wū, which is to say the spiritistic practices of temple cults. But by the second half of the 20th C., a series of changes occurred within scholarly discourse that had the effect of clouding rather than clarifying the historical and cultural nature of the Wū in southeastern China and Táiwān. First, the increasingly universal adoption of more colloquial terms like Jītǒng 乩童 and Dāng-geê 童乩 in writing on the one hand, and the gradual disassociation of Ritual Masters 法師/法官 with the Wū-xí label on the other, the primary referents of the term Wū began to lose the clarity of association which earlier authors express, even as late as the oral history describing the Minor Rite in Táinán published in 1961.

With the weakening of these associations by the ascendancy of more vernacular expressions, the terms Wū and Wū-xí acquired a certain vague indeterminacy, expressed in and reinforced by the tautology afforded by such phrases as Wū-Masters 巫師, Wū-arts 巫術, and even Wū-religion 巫教. This vagueness received further stimulus from translations of English-language scholarship on magic and witchcraft, whereby many of these same Chinese terms became equated with English words like "magician" and "witch."[266] But following the introduction of western scholarship on shamanism, for many writers this meant that even where Spirit-mediums and spirit-possession were under direct discussion, since it had become generally assumed that these were shamans, concepts associated with shamanism were comprehensively and uncritically applied to Chinese Spirit-mediums as well.

In short, shamanism became a ready-made explanation for Spirit-mediums which precluded the need for actually understanding them in their own terms. Because shamanism is a somewhat familiar concept for late 20th C. readers, it appears to make a largely unknown phenomenon instantly recognizable. Thus, more careful contextualization of Chinese Spirit-mediums becomes unnecessary, because shamanism has supplied an explanation at the outset. Moreover, the term packs a certain cachet, and avoids the negative associations flowing from largely Christian biases which assume spirit-possession to be primarily a demonic and pathological form of victimhood, rather than a primary means of manifesting immanent deities at the center of socially-normative religion, as it was in the Greco-Roman world. In framing this postwar detour

[266] I note that the Chinese-language Wikipedia article for "Wū-arts" 巫術 is the Chinese version of the English-language entry "Witchcraft." Further ahistorical conflations among Chinese terms like Wū-xí with the English "wizard," and Wū with "witch" can be found in this Wikipedia entry, and are commonplace in reference sources and other contemporary materials.

into shamanism, it is useful to recall that De Groot called Spirit-mediums "exorcists."[267] The identification with shamanism, as Giles Boilieu has pointed out, only began around 1945.[268]

In scholarship, the move to discuss Chinese spirit-mediumship as something other than an interchangeable synonym for shamanism became visible primarily in the works of Kenneth Dean, Poul Andersen, and Edward Davis, who were able to demonstrate that by rejecting the received discourse of shamanism and instead recognizing the centrality of spirit-possession, this interpretive correction opened a new window onto important trends in history, from the inception of Daoist Ritual Method with the formation of the Tiānxīn Zhèngfǎ, and the influence of Tantric aveśa possession-rites on new forms of Daoism, to the mediumistic revelation of new Daoist pantheons at the Sòng court, widespread practices of Ritual Masters involving Spirit-mediums, and funerary rites in which the spirit of the deceased was also made present through spirit-mediumship. By shifting analytic focus from a discourse of shamanism to the more precise terminology of spirit-possession, these historical processes and cultural practices are brought into focus, including the important role of spirit-writing in the revelation of Daoist scriptures.

Of relevance to themes explored in this chapter are several instances in his sources where Davis finds that "[t]he role or appellation of '*fashi*' was not limited to Daoist priests or lay exorcists,

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[267] Among his several, fanciful historical theories, De Groot also attempted to link Daoist priests with the ancient Wū, and called the former "the Wu-st priesthood."

[268] Boilieu ("Wu and Shaman," 351) pinpoints the adoption of shamanism in connection with the Chinese Wū with a paper by L.C. Hopkins (1945), followed by Edward Schafer (1951) and Arthur Waley (1955). Boilieu offers an analysis of early sources of the Chinese Wū, and compares these with scholarship of shamans. Without reference to psychic states of possession or ecstatic trance, which he deems to too subjective for meaningful analysis, he concludes that based on their performative and social contexts, as well as the religious premises of their primary rites that the differences between the two are so extensive that "[t]hese differences force me to conclude that it is better for now not to use the term 'shaman' as a translation for the Chinese ' wu'." Boilieu ("Wu and Shaman," 378).

however. We also find the term applied to some spirit-mediums (*wu*)."[269] Davis then presents three examples of such usage, in two of which ritual practitioners labeled Wū and "village medium"里巫 are also addressed as Ritual Masters 法師. In the third anecdote, where a Wū invoked the "Nine Saints of the Five Penetrations" 五通九聖, "in the rites he practiced and the divine powers he called upon, this spirit-medium was indistinguishable from the Daoist practitioner of Thunder Magic, and it took another Daoist Ritual Master to discredit him."[270] From these episodes, it appears possible that these particular Wū might have been Spirit-mediums, but perhaps it is more likely that they were in fact Ritual Masters of the more Tantric-Popular variety, whom sources from the Sòng onward have tended to label as Wū.

The Wū of late imperial sources – primarily Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters– are the foremost ritual experts of the Common Religion, and as such are working in a religious mode that does not spring from a "shamanic substrate", but rather manifests within what I call a "spiritistic paradigm." In this spiritistic paradigm, it is the movement of spirits into the human realm which structures most forms of Chinese religious practice and ideology: spirits descend into the human realm in order to enjoy sacrificial offerings and confer their blessings, to inhabit spirit-images, to take possession of Spirit-mediums or to take control of spirit-writing teams, to manifest within altar-spaces at the summons of Ritual Masters and Daoist priests, and thence, in keeping with different ritual programs, to help effect ritual transformations and transfers.

Overwhelmingly, it is this movement of spirits into the human realm (and then sending them off again) which has shaped the fundamental premises and practices of the Chinese Common

[269] Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, 52.
[270] Ibid., 53.

Religion, as well as those aspects of Daoism and Buddhist ritual which enable different manifestations of these traditions to link their supra-local and cosmic ritual systems with the regional and local symbols of the Common Religion. Within this spiritistic paradigm, Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters serve to make manifest the deified human beings and environmental spirits of local cults. They practice performative techniques which maximize the immanence of these spirits, and control over them. Hence where the *Shuōwén Jiězì* defines Wū as "those who dance and cause divinities to descend," 以舞降神者, the consistently cited "descent" remains the operative verb within this spiritistic paradigm, and in mastering techniques whereby spirits are commanded into the ritual present, Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums embody this ancient and enduring dynamic, while the tradition of the Ritual Master in particular has evolved so as to enhance command and control over the entire process.

Within this spiritistic paradigm, historical sources and the living religion reveal a number of practices which can be said to be shamanic in nature, in which ritual experts journey into the spirit world. Many of these are in fact performed by Spirit-mediums, such as the ascent to Heaven and descent into the underworld featured in (more complete versions of) the Presentation of Cash to Supplement Fortune, as well as the descent to the underworld undertaken in both the rite of Smiting the Citadel and that of Entering the Flower Garden. Of these, when a Spirit-medium performs the rite, it is the deity who makes the journey, and as with all Spirit-medium performance, the person who serves as medium will claim they are not aware of what transpires while the god has descended into their body. But oftentimes, these same rites are performed by Ritual Masters or Daoist priests serving as Ritual Masters. In such cases, the Ritual Master does not enter trance or actually experience the journey invoked symbolically by the liturgy. Hence, any comparison or

resonance with shamanism is rather attenuated, though still expressing the fundamental premise whereby ritual experts journey into the spirit-world.

Arguably, the most genuinely shamanic phenomena in contemporary practice are, on the one hand, the rite known as "Descending into the Dark" 觀落陰, in which Spirit-mediums or sometimes groups of ordinary individuals are blindfolded and taken on guided tours of the underworld, and on the other, the meditational ascent of the Daoist High Priest during the rite of Submitting the Petition 伏章 during the Three Audiences 三朝 of the Jiào.[271] Interestingly, though the Daoist High Priest's visualized ascent to celestial palaces most clearly conforms to classical definitions of shamanism, no one has called for labeling the Daoist priest a shaman.

These arguably shamanic practices become visible when we refuse to cloak the entire religious culture under the term shamanism, or label the Spirit-medium a shaman. To account for these important aspects of the religious culture, and their proportional dimensions within a spiritistic paradigm, I propose viewing these techniques whereby ritual experts either performatively or symbolically undertake journeys into spirit realms as constituting a "shamanic lane" within this overall spiritistic paradigm. Such spiritual voyage does not structure the operative premises of most religious practice, but it constitutes one pathway whereby ritual objectives are attained.

[271] Though this is not always performed during these Three Audiences. The several times I saw Chén Huáizhōng 陳懷中 perform these rites, he did not do the Submission of the Petition portion, whereas Zhōng Ānghàn 鐘昂翰 of the Shànhuà Daoist Altar always performs this sequence.

Chapter 5 The Religious World of Táinán

Preliminary remarks on the Common Religion

Examination of the religion in practice always requires a coming to terms with what I have called the Common Religion, and which scholarship has most frequently labeled as "popular religion," usually written in lower case and with no definite article, as though the subject at hand were a generic and self-evident category, a non-specific and known commodity like rice, labor-inputs, popular religion. Such nomenclature is, regardless of an author's intentions, implicitly trivializing and obfuscating. Moreover, assumptions that the primary religious mode of the Chinese people is but a hazy nimbus of disparate elements and not a definite, congruent, and concrete phenomenon have consistently led researchers to overlook the prominent structural and organizational dimensions of the religion. Nevertheless, such infelicities of nomenclature and depiction are endemic to the subject, for as soon as one begins talking about Chinese religious culture, we are faced with the question of what to call a religious mode that never had or needed a name of its own. For other ancient cultures, phrases like "Roman Religion," "Hittite Religion" and so on can broadly suffice; historically, only when religious reform movements have taken shape and come to stand in tension with the religion of society at large do named and nameable religious groupings seem to have emerged in human societies. But the complex and pluralistic landscape of traditional Chinese religious culture renders a singular nomenclature like "Chinese Religion" problematic, though arguably the regionally varied forms of the Chinese Common Religion constitute a far more coherent phenomenon than, say, all the Indian religious forms often grouped under the banner of "Hinduism." Despite inherent problems of nomenclature and definition, there is a coherent religious complex or religious mode which by virtue of its common cultic forms,

symbolic language, general ideology, and concrete social linkages we can take to be *a religion* in history and living practice.

I will here define the Common Religion as the historic strata of the religious culture composed of sacrificial and spiritistic cults dedicated primarily to former human beings (gods, ghosts, and ancestors) and largely anthropomorphic gods "in-and-of-place" –spiritual entities defining and inhabiting the same environment shared with human beings. Hence I refer to these as environmental spirits, and do not believe the concept of "nature spirits" is particularly useful in this context, as the spirits of rocks and trees exist in a continuum with the spirits of houses, village precincts, and city walls, and are thus not categorically different from spiritual entities representative of human culture. In short, the gods, altars and precincts of the Common Religion are the sanctification of society itself, the Shè Huì 社會, and as such the religion is fundamentally concerned with place, community, and territory in ways that are not found in other religious forms like sectarian groups and lay Buddhist organizations, whose pantheons and temple-cults do not share the same cultic structure of the Common Religion.

The religion is, overwhelmingly, what I term "spiritistic" –and *not* primarily shamanistic– as the direction of symbolic movement and communication in religious practice primarily involves the transmission of messages from spirits to humans, and the movement of spirits into the human realm, epitomized in the centrality of spirit-possession and spirit-writing in the religious culture. The communication is, to be sure, two-way, but the emphasis is overwhelmingly on the movement of spirits into the human world, and as such this consistent orientation is, like spirit-mediumship itself, the opposite of shamanism.

Where a shamanic pattern of humans moving into the spirit realm does exist –as in the

Daoist High Priest's meditational ascent to heavenly palaces to present memorials, and the descent of primarily Spirit-mediums but also Ritual Masters and occasionally ordinary people to the underworld– these important expressions of genuinely shamanistic phenomena are not the primary mode of the overall religion, nor are they the exclusive domain of a ritual expert we could label a shaman. Rather, these spiritual voyages of ascent and descent, together with the occasional ritual expert like Líng Mòníang 林默娘 (deified as Māzǔ 媽祖), who journeyed out of her body to rescue family members at sea, these religious phenomena constitute what I call a "shamanic lane" within an overall spiritistic paradigm. The shamanic voyage into the spirit-world does not provide the organizing principle around which religious symbolism and practice are structured. Rather, the primary nature of the Common Religion is based in this spiritistic paradigm, in which spirits move into the human world to enjoy offerings, to take possession of mediums and control spirit-possessed sedans, to inhabit spirit-images, manifest within altar-spaces, effect the unseen dimensions of ritual operations, and transmit messages through a variety of writing-instruments and divinatory devices.

The predominance of this spiritistic paradigm is so extensive, and the widespread misuse of the term "shaman" and its cognates so deleterious to depiction and analysis of Chinese religion that continued attempts to impose the term "shaman" on Spirit-mediums deserve critical scrutiny. For example, Philip Clart has argued that differentiation between shamans and Spirit-mediums "is not warranted for more recent periods of Chinese history as the ethnographic data do not demonstrate any consistent separation in practice...Therefore the terms 'shaman' and 'medium' will

here [in Clart's 2012 article] be used interchangeably".[1] Though Clart acknowledges that "mediumistic functions are more prevalent in practice,"his desire to continue conflating shamanism and spirit-mediumship is not, I argue, justified by the ethnographic data, as no one is going to label the Daoist High Priest a "shaman", even though his ascent to celestial palaces is even more shamanic than the descent to the underworld which Spirit-mediums (in unconscious trance) and Ritual Masters (performing liturgy without psychic visualization or spiritual voyage) occasionally perform, and the Ritual Master is not being labeled a shaman either, even though as a "master of spirits" the Ritual Master too more resembles a shaman in some ways than the medium. The use of "shaman" as a label for mediums is simply arbitrary and obfuscating.

Nor do these typologically shamanic fragments add up to a "shamanic substrate" underpinning the entire religious culture. Rather, a mode of religious phenomena consistently opposed to shamanism prevails in Chinese religious culture: a spiritistic paradigm of deities moving into the human world. If there is any referential basis to this conflationary use of "shaman," while defenders of this term have usually not made this point themselves I would suggest that aside from a certain scholastic inertia, and the deceptive convenience whereby the label of "shamanism" appears to provide a ready-made explanation for the subject at hand, at best such usage derives from how both the shaman and medium perform with an outward and visible entry into an altered state of consciousness. But beyond this, the ritual phenomena and operative paradigms of the shaman and the Spirit-medium cannot be so casually conflated, for reasons argued before:[2] where the shaman is conscious of and can recall his journey into spirit realms, the Spirit-medium, to avoid

[1] Philip Clart, "Chinese Popular Religion," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Chinese Religion*, ed. Randall Nadeau(Chichister: Blackwell 2012), 224.
[2] For a summary of these issues see Davis, *Society and the Supernatural,* 1-3.

being labeled a fraud *must* believe themselves or claim to be unaware and unable to recall their possession-performances; the shaman is a master of spirits, whereas Spirit-mediums and wielders of spirit-writing devices are controlled by spirits; and ultimately it is the overall orientation featuring the movement of spirits into the human realm, rather than the shamanic pattern of humans moving (consciously and in command) into the spirit realm, which structures the form, premises, and practices of most Chinese ritual, from the Common Religion and its domain of ancestor worship, to the ancient rites of state and Official Religion. Within this comprehensively spiritistic environment, there are identifiably shamanic practices that we can understand all the better if they are not conflated with spirit-mediumship, and in recognition of their place and specificity, I suggest we see such identifiably shamanic phenomena as constituting a "shamanic lane" within this larger spiritistic paradigm.

The lively communication among humans and spirits, and the overall relevance of the religion to people's lives are all made possible by the immanence of the gods as living presences, made and kept alive through the ongoing ritual maintenance of their cult, in which the life of the god is manifest in their burning incense hearth. This symbolically unbroken incense fire transmits the living presence of the god down through history and into the present, just as the rising incense smoke connects living worshippers with the deity, and forms a medium through which prayers are communicated between physical and spiritual realms, as burning by fire consistently serves to translate material objects into purely spiritual ones. Hence the concrete symbols and sacra of religious practice consistently serve to enact tangible and perceptible linkages with a spiritual domain that is constructed and experienced as existing in close contact and close resemblance with the embodied world of everyday experience.

As an expression of the enchanted world constructed through the overall cultural system, the religion is strongly world-affirmative, and in practice enacts a highly immanent form of the sacred within the world of experience, while the overall premise of religious action, in its most general and highly specific formulations, seeks primarily to banish for a time the forces of death and entropic decay which bring disease and misfortune. By expelling the impure traces of death and summoning the death-defying power of the sacred, religious action seeks to secure and multiply the goods of life in this world. To this end, religious practice also seeks to maintain the social order, which is always threatened by death and its pathogenic traces, for ultimately it is social order which gives rise to the state of "peace and safety" 平安 on which prosperity, health, and progeny depend. Even concern for the state of the dead in their graves or in the underworld is as much linked to the perceived effects the dead have, for good and ill, upon their living descendants as out of pious care for the deceased. Hence the obsession with the fēng-shuǐ of graves, which influences the fortunes of the living, and the performance of post-mortuary rites meant to improve the lot of the deceased. Such mortuary ritual is usually prompted by first by misfortune, such as a string of deaths in the family, which are then diagnosed by a Spirit-medium as originating from some ritual infelicity of the deceased's funeral, or some other condition in the underworld, thus necessitating more rites which benefit the departed soul and thereby end the corresponding disturbances visited upon their living descendants.[3] Hence even the looming importance of the

[3] For example, I have seen a case where a string of deaths in the family was traced, by a Spirit-medium, to the failure to burn Treasury Money 庫錢 during a family member's funeral (performed by Buddhists), thus necessitating a day-long series of mortuary rites performed by a Daoist priest troupe. Likewise many performances of Smiting the Fortress 打城, the rite studied by Nickerson, "Attacking the Fortress," and Lǔ Lǐzhèng 呂理政 , are prompted by unfortunate experiences of various kinds which are then diagnosed as stemming from a relative's condition in the underworld; for example, I have seen where a Spirit-medium determined that a person's health and financial woes were caused by the fact that the souls of their deceased parents had gotten lost and could not find their way to the home provided for them in (one of their) original

underworld in the religious culture is largely related to the ways in which the dead are believed to affect the living, and thus many if not most mortuary ritual performed for the deceased is done so out of the conviction that such ritual will benefit the worldly fortunes of the living.

This general ideology and its primary concern for managing the forces of death manifests prominently in the ritual world explored in this study, from the primacy of purification in ritual practice –explicitly formulated as washing away the ambient traces of death– to the spirit-soldiers of the Five Camps, the ubiquitous subordinate pantheon guarding temples and their precincts, who are recruited from the legions of the dangerous unworshipped dead –the same unhallowed ghosts who cause disease and misfortune in the first place, and are, through Ritual Master ceremony, transformed into protectors of the same community and social order that as ghosts they once threatened.

Ultimately, death, the dead, and death pollution constitute the primary problems which religious practice seeks to ameliorate. Where De Groot rightly described the religion as a "War on the Spectres," this is to say a war on death and its remnants. In conformity with this ideology of death and its impurity, the initiation of all Daoist and Ritual Method ceremony explicitly begins with exorcising the ambient traces of death which accumulate like dust in the mortal world. In other words, the sacred time and space of ritual is synonymous with the expulsion of death, as conceived in both anthropomorphic and more abstract forms, and its replacement with the death-defying, vivifying power of the sacred, purity itself which stands in opposition to the perennial impurity of death pollution.

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funeral, thus necessitating another performance of the ritual sequence known as Entering the Residence 入厝, in which a paper-mache house is formally deeded to the deceased and then burned. See Lǔ Lǐzhèng 呂理政《傳統信仰與現代社會》(臺北縣：稻鄉，民 81 [1992]).

This ideology of purity and impurity lends structure to the ritual cosmos, and manifests as an axis of purity depicted in the Daoist Jiào and funerary altars, with its zenith and upper terminus formed by the Three Pure Ones 三清, the Daoist trinity at the origin and summit of the cosmos, with its nadir, arguably, in the Lake of Blood 血湖 hell-realm into which women and children who die in childbirth descend, and which epitomizes the forces of impurity as constructed in the culture system. With the mixed mortal realm in the middle of this scheme, ritual continually works to banish the traces of death from the altar-space so that more pure divine energies can manifest in the world. Thus, the sacred as realized in altars and their cultic elements must be periodically renewed or maintained to preserve their vivifying, death-defying sacred power.

Furthermore, the key variables of ritual performance –the length of ritual, and the degrees of physical restriction imposed on the altar-space– tend to correspond with the relative elevation along this axis of purity of the deities to be summoned, and with the ritual power brought to bear on a particular transformation. Thus, while the deified human beings of the temple-cult can be summoned by Minor Rite or Spirit-medium performance in perhaps half an hour or so, summoning the Three Pure Ones, and enabling communication between the Daoist High Priest and the highest celestial palaces requires at least one, if not two days of ritual preparation. In turn this vertical axis of purity and its corresponding spatial interpretations provide an underlying structure which informs a wide range of ritual practices, from the pouring of libations to the dead on the ground, to the worship of the Jade Emperor on raised tables higher than those to local gods.

The ideology of the religion, and the overall cultural system of which it forms a central part envision a universe of moral law enforced by the gods, in which the virtuous are rewarded and evildoers punished, if not in this world than in the underworld. With this fundamental view of the

enchanted cosmos as bound by moral law, religious practice is based on the premise that the gods respond to prayers and offerings from people, and when worshipped will aid humans in obtaining the positive goods of life which they seek, and alleviation from the illnesses, epidemics, and other forms of suffering which afflict human existence. These fundamental premises of the religion are frequently expressed in the Minor Rite invocations, and an example can succinctly demonstrate these and other key aspects of the religious culture.

Prefecture and County City God(s)
In worship [I] summon Sire City God of the Prefecture and County,
I [the City God] vow in grace to save the common people.
Cultivating the mind, practicing cultivation, eating pure vegetarian [diet],
I am personally given authorized command by the Celestial Master.
Authorized and granted the title of City God, truly manifesting,
Twenty-four Officials attend [me] to the left and right.
Judges and ghost soldiers line up along two sides,
[Generals] Hán Dé and Lú Qīng examine the hidden and the visible (Yín and Yáng).
When virtuous people burn incense and express their wishes,
[I] send down blessing, send down wealth, and increase their longevity.
If there be evil people who enter My temple,
Send them to the Fēngdū [underworld] to be charged with crimes.
I exhort people, let none do shameful deeds,
Evil people in hell are punished according to their crimes.
Virtue and evil, from first to last all have their reward,
Raise your head three feet and there are gods.
Disciple of the ritual school, in concentration reverently summons,
City God of the Prefecture and County, come and descend.
Spirit soldiers, swift as fire, as the Law commands.

CXT 27 府縣城隍

拜請府縣城隍爺　　吾是恩愿救萬民
修心修行食清菜[4]　　吾是天師親敕令
敕封城隍真顯現　　二十四官左右隨
判官鬼卒兩邊排　　韓德爐清查陰陽
善人焚香口愿出　　降福降祿添壽元
那有惡人入吾殿　　送去酆都受罪名
勸人莫作虧心事　　惡人地獄罪難當
善惡到頭終有報　　舉頭三尺有神明

[4] The original text reads 收心收行, which I have here amended.

法門弟子專拜請　　府縣城隍降臨來

This invocation demonstrates a number of important themes, beginning with the shift to first-person language in which the liturgy speaks in the voice of the deity. Though this reflects the ubiquitous phenomenon of spirit-possession, such first person language is a major component of the technique that I call liturgical identification, a central and definitive element of the Ritual Method movement as a whole, in which the Ritual Master uses visualizations, ritual language, and iconographic bodily practices to become identified with an Ancestral Master or other deity. Next, following lines describing both the general, salvific mission of the deity, and an ethic of personal cultivation and vegetarianism, the deity proclaims his legitimate authority as derived from the Celestial Master himself. Such announcements of authorization appear in practically all invocations for individual deities,[5] and while the Jade Emperor is most often cited as the source of each god's legitimacy, the Celestial Master comes in as a distant second, with the deified Lǎozi 老君 occasionally referenced as well. In this emphatic declaration of local gods' legitimacy as based in symbols of Daoist altar, we see not only manifestations of the Daoist ritual framework organizing local cults, but how the claims of legitimacy in Daoist terms surely amounts to a response from temple communities to the broad challenge to such legitimacy mounted by Daoists during the long Sòng-Yuán-Míng era.

Then the text describes a series of subordinate deities in terms of their spatial relationships flanking the main god, just as they do in the temple. Here too we have a major hallmark of the religious culture, in which pantheons are organized into spatially articulated hierarchies, and these

[5] As opposed to composite pantheons such as the United Altar 合壇. These distinctions are discussed in the chapter on the Minor Rite invocations.

spatial relationships are then further depicted in ritual language and liturgical sequences. Having depicted the temple's pantheons, the invocation summarizes the basic premises of religious practice: people who piously burn incense will be rewarded with the worldly blessings that they seek, while evildoers will inevitably be punished in either this life or the afterlife. In other words, ritual practice is effective, and functions in parallel with the moral law which the gods uphold. No evil deed goes unpunished and no virtue unrewarded, because the spirits are always watching. To this effect, the text quotes the well-known Taiwanese saying, "Raise your head three feet and there are gods" 舉頭三尺有神明. The gods function as the enforcers of the cosmic moral law, be it in the courts of the afterlife, or while living by the predations of malevolent spirits who exact retribution for evil deeds.[6]

In practice, the Common Religion is organized and conducted before altars of the gods established in homes, workplaces, shrines, and temples, and it is the altar, rather than the temple per se, which forms the basic unit or venue of religious practice. The concept of an altar is of such central importance that the term has several shades of meaning that require explanation. In this study I will use the term altar in three ways, which reflect indigenous usages: first, as the actual, physical altar, the table or niche which brings together the fundamental cultic elements of an incense-burner, a spirit-image or spirit-tablet, and offerings. Second, the altar is, by extension, the term of reference for the ritual institution or group symbolically centered upon an actual, physical

[6] To stress the cultural importance of this vision of a spiritually enforced moral law, de Groot concluded, in his characteristic mixture of condescension and perspicacity that "[t]his dogma [of divine retribution] acts as a deterrent to vice; and thus Demonism, Demonomy or Demonocracy, the lowest element in religion, has, as a source of ethics, fulfilled an important mission to many thousands of millions whom Providence has appointed to live and die on Eastern Asiatic soil. Certainly this may be regarded as a phenomenon worthy the attention of students of religion." (de Groot, *Religious System of China*, 6:931)

altar. Thus we speak of specific Daoist lineages as the Yìngchuān Daoist Altar 潁川道壇, or Shànhuà Daoist Altar 善化道壇, or those of Ritual Masters, such as the Chéngxīn Tán (Altar) 誠信壇. Then an altar is also the spiritual and spatial field created by ritual performance, in which deities are summoned into presence. In this sense, ritual performance is described as "Opening an Altar" 開壇, while the most basic and universal Minor Rite Ceremony has several names, among them Purification of the Altar 清壇 and Unfolding the Altar 羅壇. These terms for ritual performance all directly indicate the spiritual nature of a sacred space created by the ritual itself, its acts of purification, and the descent of deities into the altar-space. Thus to reflect these important concepts, I will use the term altar in all three ways, to designate the physical altar which serves as the basis of the religion, as the basis of social and ritual organization, and as a spiritual creation of ritual performance.

As deified human beings are worshipped in conjunction with gods of place, every "place" has its definitive gods –be it a household, a ward, a village, or a walled city, so that the nested spatial and social units of traditional society are all represented by an altar, centered on that altar's main incense hearth. Social groups in traditional society all amount to ritually-defined altar-groups: of families and clans, professional guilds, and temple groups of varying sizes, territorial extents, and family connections. These altars and their altar-groups in turn form nodes in branching networks of ritual relations, which range from the vertical hierarchy formed by the genealogy of gods' spirit-images and incense hearths (usually called fēn xiāng 分香 or division of incense), to the more horizontal and overlapping forms of temple precinct organizations which formerly defined the spatial contours and ritual obligations of local society. Today it is still these highly formal temple precinct alliance networks that primarily sponsor the major Daoist rites and larger ritual

processions that form the culmination of the religious system, and produce the grand spectacle at the center of local culture.

In discussing the Common Religion, one must always confront the many chronic mischaracterizations of the religion that still unnecessarily shroud the subject, including most Chinese-language scholarship, which even to the present has developed largely without benefit of or recourse to post-war Western language scholarship on Daoism and Chinese religions. However, the one Western-language study which has (by virtue of translation) impacted Chinese-language scholarship is C.K. Yang's (1961) seminal work which features the partially constructive but ultimately incomplete and misleading notion of "diffused religion", which in seeking to characterize the universality of the religion throughout the culture and society, and rescue the religious culture from the pejorative category of "superstition," implicitly denies organization and institutional integrity to the Common Religion. As Yang's study did not involve fieldwork, the main elements foregrounded by field observation –ritual performance, and temple/precinct organization– did not figure in his formulation. Nor were assumptions shrouding the terms "organization" or "institution" critically appraised. Hence, a number of correctives must be applied to Yang's thesis lest the religion and its institutions disappear into a diffusive vapor.

First, observation reveals an impulse to organization, manifesting in several dimensions, to be a fundamental property of the religion, and though such organization is, in its theological and social dimensions all rather different from the planned, centralized, and textually-intensive kinds of organization found in ecumenical councils, ecclesiastic catechisms, standardized scriptures. But to downplay or deny any kind of organization in the Common Religion is to create a serious misunderstanding, as a fundamental imperative to organize is intrinsic to the religion: to organize

temple pantheons, temple committees, and temple-precinct organizations, to mobilize labor and material resources, to plan and execute complex events involving many different altar-groups, and to function as a center of authority and decision-making in the local sphere. This imperative toward organization, which sets in motion a range of wider social ramifications, originates from the most basic ideological, aesthetic, and territorial premises of the religion, all of which have concrete spatial, material, and behavioral expressions. By foregrounding these observations I do not mean to equate such local organization with the kinds of standardization which arise from more centralizing and textually-intensive forms of religious organization, but in consistently defining temple cults of the Common Religion in opposition to "organized" or "institutional" religion, it has become commonplace to assume that terms like "organization", "institution," and "theology" (or ideology) cannot be applied to the Common Religion, assumptions which only obscure major dimensions of the religious culture, and foster gross misunderstanding.

Moreover, despite his analysis of temples and their ostensible "social function" (by which he meant specialized niches of gods' symbolic specializations, and not the actual social functions of temples in society), Yang's "diffused religion" thesis hinges upon the conclusion that the religion is "so intimately fused with nonreligious institutions that 'religion' cannot be identified as an entity *sui generis*."[7] While such intensive distribution of religious elements throughout state and society may be generally true for many, if not most historical societies (such as ancient Rome etc.), in observing this profound ubiquity of religion in society, Yang was primarily concerned with establishing how a religious form could differ fundamentally from traditions like Christianity, and

[7] Stephen Teiser, "Popular Religion," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (May 1996):379, summarizing Yang's position.

still be a type of religion worthy of the name, and not mere degenerate superstition. But in coining the concept of "diffused religion," as a result of his primarily text-based methodology, I believe, Yang missed the important point that these religious elements are not simply "diffused" imperceptibly throughout a premodern, enchanted society. Rather, the elements of the religion are concretely realized in altars.

In the Common Religion, it is the altar, and not the temple per se, which forms the most basic unit of the religion, and though these altars are found in every kind of setting, from homes, businesses, shops, factories, roadside shrines, and temples, the altar, as an outpost of the sacred in the midst of everyday life, is always carefully distinguished from ordinary space, ordinary furniture, and ordinary activity. The material sacra and behavioral practices of the religion are formally concentrated into altars, and the distinctions encompassing the physical altar, like the sharply bounded nature of ritual time, are essential to how sacred power is invoked and inscribed into objects and spaces contiguous with the ordinary world of everyday experience.

There is a direct relationship between the sharp distinctions demarking sacred space and time –as manifest in altars and in ritual performance– and the technique of producing these manifestations of an immanent sacred within the world of embodied experience. Crystallizations of the sacred, such as altar installations and ritual performances, are capable of embodying such intensification of meaning and symbolic power precisely because they are bounded and thereby subject to a different and non-ordinary mode of language and action. Hence, the altar must be installed by a ritual expert, at a time and day deemed propitious, and once installed, the incense burner, spirit-images and spirit-tablets cannot be casually moved for the entire installation is sacred, which is to say a material precipitate of the rituals that consecrated its elements and installed them

in place. One this outpost of the sacred has been established, the altar must always be approached through the formalized gestures and behavior of ritual action. Even the dismantling of an altar and cessation of its cultic worship requires a ritual called "Retiring (or withdrawing) the Spirit" 退神. The sacred is enveloped within ritual, and only through ritual, however simple or reflexive, can the sacred be approached or engaged.

Whenever someone approaches an altar, whether to burn incense, renew the flowers and offerings, to pour libations of water or spirits, or to move a spirit-image for whatever reason, these actions must be conducted in the formalized mode of ritual behavior, and so all dealings with an altar are bracketed within gestures of reverence: a simple but formal clasping of hands in a slight bow, or raising the offerings and incense in formalized gestures– these opening and concluding acts envelop the mundane doings of changing the flowers or fruit within the demarcated enclosure of the sacred, wherein gesture and language must be formalized, inflected, and distinguished from ordinary language and action. Even if the altar is directly adjacent to a restaurant's shelf or stove, or in the center of a traditional home where guests are received, the modes of behavior appropriate to the ordinary shelves, stoves, and tea-tables must be set aside when approaching the altar for whatever purpose. The altar constitutes a sacred realm which is always engaged through formalized ritual gestures, however brief or perfunctory, and as such altars are never simply blended or diffused into the domain of ordinary objects and activities that may be immediately adjacent to the altar itself. Having been created and installed through ritual, the altar and its sacra are bounded and distinguished as sacred, and to engage the altar means to enter this formalized realm of ritual.

Based on long-term and close-hand observation of ritual practice, I have found that

throughout the religious culture, the sacred is produced through a two-fold technique, observable in every dimension of religious practice, in which the sacred is *bounded and formalized, enveloped and inflected, bracketed and italicized, encircled and accented.* Techniques of bracketing, bounding, and encircling the sacred are expressed both in time (with the sharply bounded nature of ritual time of particular importance) as well as in space, and relative to objects of all kinds, through a variety of techniques and media, but primarily with incense and spirit-money, which is used to physically envelop, encircle, insulate and demarcate items as sacred. Bracketed within these oft-repeated gestures of encirclement, the acts performed during ritual, and the duration of ritual time itself are then inflected and formalized so as to distinguish them from ordinary actions and ordinary time and imbue them with the particular power of ritual time, ritual language, inflected mode of ritual.[8]

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[8] Let me here state that the bounded, non-ordinary mode of ritual time and space practiced in this cultural context, and which in its most fundamental parameters forms a common basis among Daoist and Ritual Master/Minor Rite ceremony, as well as Spirit-medium performance, cannot be characterized as "liminal" in the sense championed by Victor Turner, just as ritual in general cannot, in the final analysis, be equated with rites of passage. Turner's concept of liminality, developed from van Gennep's analysis of rites of passage, emphasizes the indeterminacy of the people or elements involved. In Turner's conception, "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial...liminal beings [...] have no status, property, insignia, secular clothing indicating rank or role... distinctions of rank and status disappear or are homologized." [Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969/1977),95]. Elsewhere, Turner seeks to establish that "almost *all* types of rites [have] the preprocessural form of passage," and argues that van Gennep's three stages of the rite of passage (separation, transition, incorporation) can thence be applied to "almost *all* "forms of ritual. By his assessment, during the stage of separation, there is a "detachment of ritual subjects (novices, candidates...) from their previous social statuses", while in the transitional "limen" phase, "the ritual subjects pass through a period and area of ambiguity, a sort of social limbo which has few...of the attributes of either the preceding or subsequent profane social statuses or cultural states." [Victor Turner. *Process, Performance, and Pilgrimage* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1979), 16, emphasis in original]. In this detachment and separation, participants, and ritual time itself are "temporarily undefined, beyond the normative social structure," and thus create an "anti-structural" dimension capable of innovation and adaptation. [Turner, Ibid., 19-20]. These analyses may be applicable to the rites of passage from which they were derived, but such characterizations do not accord with the traditional Chinese ritual world of Daoist, Ritual Master, and temple ceremony, in which rather than producing a detachment from or suspension of the social structure, ritual serves to enact an intensified image of that social structure. In this ritual context, we find not anti-structure, but ultra-structure; rather than a suspension of social status, there are amplifications of status, as participants are invariably ranked according to the relevant

In ritual not only are gestures, words, and movements all formalized or stylized in conformity with particular liturgical rules, ritual time itself is also usually inflected or stylistically demarcated through music or the beat of a drum, or the rhythmic pulse of a hand-bell which continues as long as ritual time is open. Hence these techniques of inflecting and formalizing ritual action and language are coterminous with the bounded nature of ritual time. The objects sanctified through ritual, like spirit-images and altar installations, remain after the ritual has concluded as a crystallization of the rituals that produced them, an outpost of the sacred in the ordinary, though enchanted world, and as such the altar and its sacra must be approached through the bounded-and-inflected mode of ritual. Moreover, the altar-cult must be properly maintained through a variety of periodic rites, offerings, and acts of renewal, or its sanctity will diminish with the passage of (non-ritual) time in the mortal world.

From my sustained observation of ritual life in southern Táiwān, I have come to a somewhat different conclusion than Kenneth Dean, who has argued for "an alternate approach to local ritual traditions as the intensification of everyday life, rather than the establishment of a separate sacred space or a private domain of individualized worship."[9] I agree that "individualized

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status hierarchy at play, while such social ordering is directly mirrored in the symbolic hierarchies on display in the ranked spirit-images of temple pantheons and Daoist altars. The symbolic media, which create much of the aesthetic intensification of ritual, directly embody the image of social hierarchy, while ritual participants experience the proceedings according to their place within the same status hierarchy of seniority, wealth, and managerial position that existed prior to the ritual. In the most formal of rites, these status positions are conspicuously marked by clothing and emblems which distinguish their ranks. The closest indigenous term for temple religion, which I call the Common Religion, is the Shèhuì 社會, a term which literally means "gathering to worship the Community Earth God," but which later came to mean "society." The religion itself is the sacralization of the social structure. Thus the religious system itself and its ritual construction of the sacred amount to a polar opposite of liminality, which outside the context of pilgrimage, has but few meaningful applications in traditional Chinese religions.

[9] Kenneth Dean and Zheng Zhenman, *Ritual Alliances of the Putian Plain, Volume One: Historical Introduction to the Return of the Gods* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 52.

worship" is not the basis of religious life in this context, and there are notable intensifications of everyday life at play in ritual life, such as the way inferiors and juniors relate to their superiors and seniors. But I have found that it is precisely by demarcating an enclosure of the sacred, in both time and space, and by then formalizing and inflecting ritual language and behavior precisely so as to distinguish it from the ordinary, that an immanent construction of the sacred is made manifest within the field of social, embodied experience. This immanent sacred exists within and at times inundates the world of everyday experience, but only by concentrating religious symbols within this enclosure of the sacred are the powers of the religion heated to the point that they boil over into the streets for the limited duration of a festival, and thereby create a center of gravity around which other spaces for play and economic life are brought into orbit around the ritual nuclei of periodic community festivals and the permanent community temple.

This distinction between sacred and profane is essential to the religion and its projection of an immanent sacred within the world of everyday experience. Religious behavior and installations may be universally distributed throughout the society, and represent a form of religion whose concepts of centralizing authority are symbolic (via the Jade Emperor and the Daoist celestial bureaucracy) rather than ecclesiastical, but religious behavior and religious institutions are not so "diffusive" that one cannot identify their concrete material and behavioral existence. Hence I find Yang's terminology misleading, and his general thesis often at odds with the religion in practice, despite his laudable attempt to free Chinese religion from an inferior position in an imperialist hierarchy of cultural evolution. Uncritical acceptance of the notion of "diffused religion" is, I believe, one of several reasons why concepts of structure, organization, and patterned integration among different ritual traditions are all conspicuously absent in most research on these

subjects. According to Yang, there is not supposed to be any organization (or structure) in the religious culture, and these assumptions have become a major impediment to research and observation.

The tendency to render the Common Religion in excessively diffusive terms has caused the subject to go out of focus in many depictions. To again take Clart's generally insightful 2012 article as an example, the author attempts to finesse the problems of nomenclature and definition with his own promising and nuanced interpretation which is then overextended in such a way as to lose sight of important patterns:

> that 'popular religion' is primarily a heuristic concept and not an unambiguous empirical phenomenon. Heuristically, it allows the researcher to group together data that *indicate systemic cohesion* without being clearly identifiable with an (emically or etically *named*) cultural subsystem. Its purpose...is not to serve as a residual category for the religious offs and ends that do not fit under the heading of one of the 'great traditions,' but to direct attention to the 'lived religion' of the Chinese people in different time periods and different regions of the Chinese cultural sphere. It is the religion of people of all classes beyond institutional contexts immediately controlled and run by professional clergy or central state authorities, yet these contexts may still play various roles in the sphere of popular religion. (emphasis added)[10]

So far Clart's depiction here is laudable, and I note that by placing this chapter on the primary "lived religion of the Chinese people" as the *tenth chapter* of an introductory text on Chinese religions further illustrates how enduring trivialization and misconception continues to help bury knowledge of what is *the* main religious tradition of "Chinese people of all periods of history," "all regions of the Chinese cultural sphere," as well as "all classes" of society. Nevertheless, Clart goes on to say that

[10] Philip Clart,"Chinese Popular Religion," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Chinese Religion*, ed. Randall Nadeau (Chichister: Blackwell 2012), 219-220.

> The heuristic key of 'popular religion' opens up vistas of a vast religious landscape that includes diverse phenomena such as the ancestral cult at house altars and lineage halls, the worship of tutelary divinities at roadside shrines and village temples, the lifecycle rituals of families, the seasonal festivals of communities, *and the beliefs and practices of numerous so-called 'popular sects'* (*i.e. lay-based religious movements with their own scriptures, traditions, and leadership separate from the major religious traditions.*) (emphasis added)[11]

While Clart is right to indicate the "systemic cohesion" among the first several phenomena listed here, he then explicitly includes "popular sects" like the prolific and widespread groups descending from Lúo Qīng 羅清 (1442-1547) , which include the late-imperial schools collectively labeled as "Vegetarian Religion"齋教 (Zhāijiào) in Táiwān , as well as the later Yīguàn Dào 一貫道 and its many splinter-groups. To include these "Sectarian" traditions in the same field of "systemic cohesion" found among community festivals, village temples and domestic altars is to blur important distinctions that obtain possibly in a great many areas, and certainly in the greater Taiwanese region. These distinctions are important to apprehension and definition of what I call the Common Religion, or what one might call the Shè Huì 社會.

First, we observe that ritual processions do not enter or formally stop at the halls and temples of these Sectarian traditions; even if, in the past these halls and temples *hypothetically may have*, like most other households and shops, set up Incense Tables 香案 to greet passing deities in procession, they no longer do. The same can be said of monastic Buddhist temples; both are typically excluded from ritual processions; they are not part of the Shè Huì. Even in Xīgǎng 西港, where a sizeable Buddhist monastery sits right beside the "Big Temple" 大廟 (the Qīng Ān Gōng

[11] Clart, "Chinese Popular Religion," 220.

慶安宮) which holds the massive triennial Royal Jiào 王醮, with only the rarest of exceptions, none of the hundreds of deities carried in procession ever enters the Buddhist temple, even though every last one processes past it, and must often wait for extended periods at the Buddhist temple's gate.

When performing a Jiào, a temple will gather incense from allied and other temples, including from important community temples like those to the Jade Emperor, Xuántiān Shàngdì, and Guānyīn, and join this incense-ash in a ceremony called Uniting the [Incense] Burners 合爐, but again no incense is ever taken from any Sectarian temple, or historic Vegetarian Hall 齋堂, and only in rare instances are ashes from a monastic Buddhist temple taken, such as the Fǎhúa Sì 法華寺, as Guānyīn's incense is taken largely from the fully networked Popular temples to Guānyīn in Táinán and Ānpíng, both named the Guānyīn Pavilion 觀音亭.[12]

Most Sectrarian temples are not open to the public; with the possible exception of one or two renovated Vegetarian Halls in Táinán (such as the Déhuà Táng 德化堂, which is often closed to the public in ways no Popular temple ever would be) people outside the Sectarian or lay-Buddhist group generally would never enter such a temple to burn incense and worship in the same manner they would at a Popular temple. Sectarian groups require initiation before people

[12] The Ānpíng Guānyīn Tíng does in fact hold annual and periodic ceremonies conducted by monastic Buddhists, though the temple itself is administered in a purely Popular context, and completely integrated in to the nexus of local temples, processions, and other community ritual events. Clearly, temples to Buddhist deities form one important area where Buddhist monastics have and still do engage what amount to local cults, even if the cultic figures are technically Buddhist. Though the role of Buddhist monastics (as opposed to various lay Buddhistic performers) in local cults varies in both historical periods and regional settings, there is still no Buddhist parallel to the Jade Emperor and other symbols of the Daoist altar, which are consistently depicted as presiding over local gods in much if not most of traditional southern China and its diasporic communities. Nor has monastic Buddhism adopted large numbers of local Chinese gods into its subordinate pantheons. Whatever engagement between local cults and monastic Buddhism may be found in certain post-Sòng settings, there is simply no Buddhist equivalent to the extensive integration and interaction witnessed among local cults and Daoist traditions, in which the entire nature of Daoism has been transformed by the assimilation of local gods from the late Táng onward.

can be admitted to their rites and welcomed into their halls; this stands in stark contrast to the inclusive and pubic nature of the Common Religion.

Moreover the cultic structure of these Sectarian halls is different: there is often not the outer Lord of Heaven Incense Burner 天公爐, and where there is such a burner is instead understood as the Buddhist-style Ten-Directions Burner 十方爐 which is not dedicated to the Jade Emperor. In Sectarian halls and monastic Buddhist temples and lay Buddhist halls, there are not the same gods and subordinate pantheons shared by Popular temples, nor are deities arranged in the same spatial hierarchies and sequences. Even in the most syncretic of Sectarian temples, like those of the Lónghuá Jiào 龍華教, which have an Earth God 土地公 and a City God 城隍爺 as standard deities, they are enshrined toward the door of the temple in positions unseen in community temples, while the main altars and spirit-niches of Lónghuá Jiào halls are completely different. The same came be said of the Jīnchuáng Jiào 金幢教, whose Vegetarian Halls enshrine the Daoist Grand Emperors of the Three Offices 三官大帝, figures of cultural legitimacy who are likewise enshrined in many Popular temples (including "Official Temples" of the Qīng Registry of Sacrifices 祀典 like the Grand Māzǔ Temple 大天后宮), and who are widely worshipped in traditional homes with a Lords-of-the-Three-Realms Incense Burner 三界公爐 suspended near the central door, the rest of the Vegetarian Hall's altars, niches, and inner chambers are completely unlike those of "ordinary" temples.[13] There are no camps of spirit-soldiers in Vegetarian Halls, no Sire Tiger 虎爺, none of the Spirit-generals or Prime Marshals found in virtually every temple of the Common Religion. Nor are the definitive Sectarian deities, like the Unborn Eternal Mother 無生老母 or their various

[13] See Zhāng Kūnzhèn 張崑振, 《台灣的老齋堂》(台北縣新店: 遠足文化, 民 82 [1993]), which provides rich illustrations and detailed information about the layout and content of specific Zhāijiào Sectarian halls in Táiwān.

Ancestral Masters worshipped in community temples of the Common Religion.[14]

Furthermore we must recognize the special ideological nature of Sectarian groups, which are largely united by their worship of the Unborn Eternal Mother 無生老母, the central figure of Lúo Qīng's new dispensation, and who seeks to redeem her human children from the red-dust world of suffering and exile –a broadly millenarian or transcendental soteriology that likewise differs sharply from the world-affirmative ideology of the Common Religion. Thus the cultic forms, religious ideologies, and social relations of Sectarian groups and the Common Religion are quite different, and must be distinguished. The concrete details which help differentiate Sectarianism from the Common Religion also underscore how the latter (at least in the greater Taiwanese and Mínnán regions) is less ambiguous and more cohesive than Clart and others have suggested. If there are regions or locales where Luó Qīng-style Sectarian groups (which the Three-In-One 三一教 studied by Dean is not) do actively participate in the networked altars and processions of the communal religion[15], then this hypothetical possibility needs to be first demonstrated, and then put into context, and kept in proportion. Even if such examples could be found, they cannot offset the strong patterns of difference and exclusion visible in Táiwān and elsewhere. These same distinctions can be applied to other spirit-writing and group-possession temples which differ ideologically, cultically, and organizationally from the Sectarian religion of the Unborn Eternal

[14] As perhaps the single most widely shared religious symbol in the entire culture, Guānyīn appears in most Sectarian altars (and perhaps a large majority of domestic altars), though whether she is, at least in some cases, meant to indicate the Unborn Eternal Mother is always an open question.

[15] In his 2005 study of religion in rural northern China, *The Sacred Village*, Thomas Dubois does mention processions by Sectarian groups, but not only is this a very different regional environment from southeastern China, it is not clear that these processions are linked to other, non-sectarian community temples. See Thomas Dubois , *The Sacred Village: Social Change and Religious Life in Rural North China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005).

Mother: "Phoenix Halls" 鸞堂, which often call themselves "Confucian" 儒教, and many spirit-writing temples dedicated to figures like Lǚ Dòngbīn 呂洞賓 are likewise not included in ritual processions, precinct alliances, and the ritual life of community temples.

As a kind of natural phenomenon, the Common Religion more resembles a forest than a golf course, and so there is a genuine zone of ambiguity found in some spirit-writing groups, with certain temples to Guān Gōng 關公 (in the Qīng strongly associated with elite spirit-writing [16]) and the Golden Mother of the Jade Pool 瑤池金母(as well as other deities) which emphasize spirit-writing, and whose cultic structures are largely the same as Popular community temples. Some of these host Daoist rituals performed by Daoist priests, and in varying degrees may or may not participate in community temple life. Nevertheless, as Clart stated this "living religion" of the Chinese people was not meant to be a catch-all for everything outside of monastic Buddhist, ordained Daoist, and degree-holding Confucian ritual traditions; this same caution should be applied to these "popular sects" which play important roles in the history of Chinese religions, but which are not the same as the communal Shè Huì. Conflation of these different religious forms is one persistent reason why the structures and organizations shaping the Common Religion are consistently overlooked.

Another major source of confusion is the now ubiquitous Mandarin term "popular belief" 民間信仰 (mínjiān xìnyáng), which declares the main religious tradition of the Chinese people to be something less than and inferior to true "religion," thus perpetrating now into the 21st century fully 19th century ideas of cultural evolution which Tambiah has shown to be the Victorian and

[16] For a useful survey of primary sources depicting late imperial spirit-writing see Xǔ Dìshān 許地山, 《扶箕迷信的研究》(臺北市: 台灣商務, 1994 [民 83]).

imperialist legacy of Hebraic, Christian, and Protestant strategies for delegitimizing the "pagan" religions of competing groups and non-white cultures.[17] But in denying the status of "religion" itself to the traditions of Chinese people, and coining the term "belief" as a sub-religious category, these late 19th century Japanese writers went even further than Tylor, who posited an evolutionary teleology of primitive, "natural religion" evolving with ascending civilization into "higher religion." But in seizing upon "belief" 信仰 as the main identifiable feature of the subject, these same Japanese writers, in their zeal for Western learning were drawing from the vocabulary of Western, rather than Chinese (or Japanese) religions, and in so doing set forth on a particularly unhelpful direction for the study of Chinese religions.

In many Abrahamic religions it is the very act of belief, and therefore its content, which forms the prime locus of religious action, but this emphasis on belief and creed is precisely where the creedal religions of western Eurasia differ most sharply from the Chinese Common Religion and other East Asian traditions. As Watson in particular has argued, "belief" per se is not among the primary, definitive characteristics of the religion; instead ritual form and ritual performance take precedence, and thereby accommodate a range of different beliefs and perceptions which Watson shows to vary among class and gender differences, as well as between ritual experts and laymen.[18] Though there is an indigenous concept of "sincerity" 誠 in worship and ritual,[19] regarding

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[17] Stanley Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[18] James L. Watson, "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T'ien Hou ("Empress of Heaven") Along the South China Coast, 960-1960,"in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 292-324; "The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites: Elementary Forms, Ritual Sequence, and the Primacy of Performance," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, edited by James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1988), 3-19.

[19] For a classic statement of the role of sincerity 誠 in the efficacy of ritual, see DFHY 1 《清微道法樞紐》.

the religion itself, indigenous discourse consistently emphasizes cultic worship (廟食，房廟，祭祀 etc.); "belief" is not a particularly noticeable category of Chinese religious life. Even the millennia of multilateral culture war within and between Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist and Popular camps was usually over cultic form: who is worshipping what and how. As several scholars have argued, these cultural debates are best understood as concerned with "orthopraxy" rather than "orthodoxy." Whether in terms of religious life or cultural polemic, belief per se has never been the main issue.

Nevertheless, this 19th century reading of Chinese religion as but crude and dis-ordered "popular belief" has, from its origins in 19th century Japanese ethnography and thence through the writings of the Taiwanese ethnographer Liú Zhīwàn 劉枝萬 become canonical in Chinese-language scholarship. This phrase "popular belief" has in turn yielded "belief" 信仰 as a designation for the cultic worship of specific deities, so that what is more constructively viewed as a "cult" in its proper and original sense is instead designated a "belief," with the historical cults of deities labeled "Māzǔ belief" 媽祖信仰, "Wángye belief" 王爺信仰 and so on. This problematic terminology has, in concert with other methodological tendencies, helped distract research from the concretely observable domains of cultic institutions, cultic structures, religious symbols, and historical processes, while perpetrating significant misunderstandings about the modern study of religions. Furthermore this phrase "popular belief" is often paired with the English "folk religion," a familiar mischaracterization of the Chinese Common Religion which Schipper (1985:22) has specifically refuted, but which still persists in English and Chinese language writings, usually with no theoretical justification.[20] Where arguments are made to justify the term "popular belief," (as in

[20] Schipper writes, "Accustomed as we are (alas!) to associate the religion of the Chinese people, that is, its *she-hui* (Assembly of the Earth God), with "folk religion," we would expect the ritual expression of this religion to be in the spoken language only. And the equally widely accepted view of Chinese local society as being composed

Wáng 王 and Pí 皮 2010:1-3)[21] appeal is made to Redfield's paradigm of great and little traditions, which, as Sangren has argued are not really applicable to the Chinese Common Religion.[22]

To clarify what Sangren and other critics of the great and little traditions paradigm have not fully articulated, the Common Religion was and is *the* mainstream religion of the "primary civilization," and though capable of facilitating both class integration and class segregation,[23] in the worship of specific gods and in its general form, the Common Religion was universal throughout the urban metropole in core areas, received official recognition (through titles for gods and inscription-plaques for temples), and was often invoked by members of the imperial court, while supported by local elites as part of their strategy to dominate local society. Hence all of the possible senses denoted by the great and little traditions paradigm, which primarily reflects historical conditions in Europe and the Americas, do not correspond to the particular kinds of cultural exchange that shaped Chinese religion. Even though we can speak of a state-sponsored "Official Religion" that exhibited both overlap with and difference from the Common Religion, the relationship between the late imperial Official Religion and the Common Religion of society amounts to an intriguing inverse of the relationship posited in Redfield's paradigm, as the Official

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of isolated, fragmented and politically underdeveloped communities encompasses the natural assumption that the ritual performances at local festivals would be in *dialect*. The actual situation contradicts these expectations. The vernacular rituals are in an idiom not confined to a small community, but instead use a language shared by large linguistic and cultural groups. Moreover, along with performances in the vernacular, we also find rituals in classical Chinese, which is even more at variance with "folk religion." The concept of folk religion, then, does not seem to apply to Chinese local cults and their liturgical traditions." Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical," 22.

[21] Wáng Jìanchuān 王見川 and Pí Qìngshēng 皮慶生. 《中國近世民間信仰：宋元明清》(上海：上海人民出版社，2010), 1-3.

[22] Steven Sangren, "Great and Little Traditions Reconsidered: The Question of Cultural Integration in China," *Journal of Chinese Studies* Vol. 1:1 (Feb. 1984) 1-24.

[23] As seen for example in "Official Temples" 祀典 / 官方廟 to Popular deities like Guān Gōng and Māzǔ, which were, in imperial times, only open to the general public on certain feast days.

Religion was largely a pious fiction of back-to-antiquity 復古 ideology, and was really only vital where it directly sought to co-opt Popular piety through the cult of the City God, and other Popular gods like Guān Gōng 關公.[24] With the end of state support after 1911, the rites of the Official Religion simply passed into oblivion, while the vital Common Religion has, at least in some regions, managed to survive into the present, even in the face of world-historic persecution.

As the most universal religious form in the culture, historically encompassing elite and common classes, the Common Religion never had nor needed a name to distinguish it from the enchanted universe envisioned by the culture generally, leaving scholars long at pains to give the religion a fitting name.[25] But from the late Táng, Five Dynasties and Sòng onward, ritual assemblies to worship new local gods became literally synonymous with traditional society itself – the Shè Huì 社會, the "Assembly of the Community Earth God", which served as the basic

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[24] On the three annual processions of the City God, including the seventh lunar-month sacrifices to malevolent ghosts at the Lì Tán 厲壇 see Guo Qitao, *Exorcism and Money: The Symbolic World of the Five Fury Spirits in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2003); on late imperial Official Religion see Romeyn Taylor,"Official Religion in the Ming," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 8, the Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, edited by Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 840-892. De Groot considered the cults (or at least certain temples) of the City God (or, the God of Walls and Moats 城隍神) and Guān Gōng to be elements of "State-religion." The state association with these gods, whose origins lie in purely Popular contexts, and who were the focus of Daoist ritual for far longer than such state involvement, amounts to pure co-option of Popular traditions. In his valuable depiction of ritual processions in late Qīng Xiàmén to expel epidemics, de Groot reports that if the repeated processions by temples, mediums, Ritual Masters and local elites do not bring and end to the epidemic, "notables and priests confess themselves unable to help the people unless they set in action divinities of the State-religion, whose power in the unseen world stands on a par with that of the almost omnipotent mandarinate in the world of man. But only in walled cities or forts such gods dwell, viz. the god of Walls and Moats, and Kwan-ti [Guān-dì 關帝], the famous god of War and Military Affairs, respectively patron divinities of the civil and military authorities." (de Groot, *Religious System of China*, ˆ:986).

[25] See Catherine Bell, "Religion and Chinese Culture: Toward an Assessment of 'Popular Religion." *History of Religions*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Aug., 1989): 35-57. Bell finds that "in reaction to the divisiveness of "official" and "folk" religion, the term "popular religion" was appropriated to designate an emphasis on social unities. In the third stage [in Western historiography] of this procession of terms (e.g., "elite/ folk," to "popular" religion, to "religious cultures") historians appear to have sought a notion of culture that would recognize how a society produces both differences and unities within its cultural categories and social organization." It is in this spirit that I use the term Popular Religion, as producing both social unities and social segmentation.

institution joining different social and familial altar-groups in community ritual, and which gave the modern Chinese language (via 19th c. Japanese intellectuals) its term for "society." Indeed the Shè 社 or Community Earth God, with its territorial cult definitive of place and belonging, has long been shorthand for "community." To this day, local temple precincts are often still called "Shè", as in Ānpíng 安平, where each "community" is centered on a temple whose cult and precincts are maintained by each precinct's Minor Rite troupe, their Spirit-mediums, and a rotating pool of two Daoist altars. Scholarship has brought to light the long historical process whereby many of these local Shè came to acquire individual identities, and evolved from generic gods of place into the more personalized, anthropomorphic gods and goddesses typical of the Common Religion, deities that in many cases would come to be worshipped beyond their places of origin.

Despite the tremendous impact of modernity on the religion, from the advent of modern medicine and the resultant decline of healing and child-bearing ritual, to increased mobility, urbanization, and the partial displacement of traditional, liturgical time by a Western, "National" calendar, in Táiwān the religion has not merely survived the vicissitudes of the 20th century, but as in earlier eras of economic growth, postwar prosperity has poured into funding the performances and institutions of the religion, fueling broad patterns of expansion –in especially the size but also the number of temples, and innovation visible in new performance troops, offering displays, and fund-raising techniques.[26] And though many older people recall that in the past "the gods were bigger"–that they commanded greater awe and larger crowds, still today when more important gods are carried out in procession, and when entire temple networks mobilize to undertake the

[26] One prominent example of the latter being the post-war adoption of modern-style temple "lantern" installations like the Lamp of Radiance" 光明燈 that people can purchase for the year, and which appear to have originated in Hong Kong and then spread to Táiwān.

major Daoist Jiào which punctuate and structure the religious system as a whole, such religious festivals are still among the largest events of any kind in the society. These major festivals and processions arise from and bring to culmination ongoing cycles of daily, monthly, and annual ritual, in which the passage of traditional time is primarily measured by the birthdays of the gods themselves, together with the major life-events of their temples and altar communities. It is in these annual and periodic celebrations that we find the Minor Rite, together with Spirit-mediums, at the center of religious life.

The Minor Rite and Língbǎo Daoism in Táinán- some general observations

Examination of the Minor Rite in practice necessarily foregrounds this broad Popular base of the religious system in a way usually not afforded by studies devoted primarily to classical Daoism, and the brings a range of important considerations into focus that were less readily apparent to earlier generations of scholars mainly invested in researching the ritual world within the sealed Daoist altar, rather than the tumultuous spectacle outside, much less the rhythms and details of the temple's own ritual world.

First, sustained observation of the religious system in southern Táiwān reveals that the structural hierarchy of ritual performers largely corresponds to the spatial hierarchies of temple-precinct organization, with Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters primarily controlling the human gods and spirit-soldiers of the Five Camps which mark out the temple precinct and the space of the temple itself. Rites to consecrate a new temple building and to open a new temple's doors are overwhelmingly Red-Headed, or Tantric-Popular in nature, and though sometimes conducted by Daoist priests, they are more likely to be performed by Ritual Masters, and when opening a new

temple, usually in tandem with Spirit-mediums.

Thus, within the temple building and precinct, the Spirit-medium and Ritual Master tend to predominate, a condition which has produced numerous and important structural developments within the temple cult itself, as core symbols of the Red-Headed, Tantric-Popular Ritual Method have become fixed elements in the cultic structure, most prominently the Five Camps, which are deemed mandatory for any temple or altar which conducts mediumistic communication of any kind, as well as enshrinement of the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar in the spatial center of the temple. The composite pantheon of the 36 Official Generals is also frequently installed within temples, particularly in Pénghú and certain coastal areas. As the Five Camps in particular require ongoing maintenance through periodic Rewarding of the Troops 犒賞 and other rites, this mandatory integration of the temple-cult and the Five Camps requires the periodic performance of Ritual Master ceremony. Moreover, as the Five Camps are frequently invoked in healing rituals across the wider region and throughout southeastern China, we again see the essential connections between temple rites and individual-oriented healing and protective ritual, in which the latter is framed in reference to the larger ritual and symbolic world of the temple-cult, which in turn is deployed and made relevant to individuals through a range of rites for healing, protection, and the enhancement of worldly existence. This entire domain, including the lives of spirit-images in temples, the consecration of temples, and the ongoing weekly and annual sessions which offer spiritual assistance through mediumistic communication, and which maintain the sanctity of the temple and its precinct are completely dominated and even defined by the symbols and practices of the Red-Headed Ritual Master and their partner, the Spirit-medium.

But where multiple precincts are joined into larger configurations, with but one important

exception[27] it is prevailing custom that rites which involve mobilization of entire and extended temple alliance networks tend to be varieties of Jiào conducted by ordained Daoist priests, with the exorcistic, plague-expelling Royal Jiào 王醮 (王船醮 ōngtzun jiuh) normally arousing the most intensive community participation.[28] Jiào of different kinds are usually performed in fixed intervals of three, five, twelve or more years, but in most areas custom mandates that temples perform a Jiào after a temple has been rebuilt or significantly restored, the idea being that the Jiào is necessary for the temple building, precinct, and incense hearth to be optimally viable and flourishing. Clearly there are implications of cultic legitimacy involved as well, as all deities in the religion are specifically recognized as obtaining their legitimate authority from the Jade Emperor and other symbols of the Daoist altar.

As the culmination of the religious system, a Jiào is the climax of people's religious lives, and of community participation. As a Jiào is extremely expensive, temples seek contributions from not just families and donors but most importantly from other temples in their alliance network. The imperative to help finance the performance of the Daoist Jiào (and the Rite of Universal

[27] This being the rite of recruiting new spirit-soldiers from the souls of the dead, which I discuss in another note below. Certain large rural temples in southern Táiwān perform this rite periodically, or when the deity indicates it. In such cases, all the temples in the Big Temple's precinct will process together to the oceanside, usually featuring performance by Sòngjiāng Zhèn 宋江陣 self-defense troupes. The rite itself is performed by a Ritual Master and at least one Spirit-medium and-or spirit-possessed sedan chairs. Importantly, however, while such rites mobilize an extended precinct alliance, the level of contribution and participation involved in this one or two day rite is nowhere near as intensive as a Daoist Jiào.

[28] In the Táinán area, one important manifestation of this type of exception is the Xuéjiă (Hak Gah) 學甲 "Going up to Báijiāo"上白礁 ceremony, which mobilizes an entire extended network of village temples around Xuéjiă, and is based not around a Jiào but around a rite which simultaneously commemorates the first settlers' landfall, and simulates pilgrimage to Bǎoshēng Dàdì's ancestral temple at Báijiāo. However, the rite itself is arguably centered around the recruitment of spirit-soldiers from the waters of the Jiàngjūn River, and in turn this resupply of spirit-soldiers is then passed on to the temples which regard the Xuéjiă Cíjì Gōng as their ancestral temple when they make pilgrimage and request fire 請火 from the Cíjì Gōng. In this rite, the roles of Ritual Master and Daoist priests are largely reversed, with Daoist priests preceding the procession route performing ritual purification of incense-tables 香案 families set up at their doors along the procession route. In rural and suburban Jiào, normally it is the Ritual Master who purifies altars and homes of the precinct.

Salvation 普度) is a major factor stimulating the development of more extended, territorially non-contiguous precinct alliances in the contemporary-modern system. Historical arguments about the role of Daoism in the formation of local and trans-local networks also point to this organizational imperative produced by the interactions of Popular and Daoist ritual. If at a symbolic level, social organization is facilitated by how the higher Daoist gods create signifiers superseding local and micro-local altar-groups, at the material level of practice, the organization, mobilization, and fundraising necessary for a Jiào are among the largest incentives to building and maintaining temple precinct alliances, even where other practical pressures such as self-defense, mutual support , and irrigation maintenance have receded.

These various kinds of precinct alliances form the main institutional support financing and organizing the entire undertaking of a major, multi-day Jiào. Though other ritual cycles, such as visiting one's Ancestral Temple, recruiting spirit-soldiers from the ocean (in the case of rural temples), or opening a new or restored temple will also necessarily involve the ritual participation of allied temples, there can be no doubt the level of financial contribution and ritual participation reaches its greatest degree during a Jiào. In southern Táiwān, where the Jiào custom is most intensive, the performance of a Jiào is inseparable from the host-temple's precinct-alliance network.

During the evenings of the Jiào, each temple group walks in procession to the temple holding the Jiào where they are conducted inside the sealed Jiào altar to formally worship the high Daoist gods. Each temple makes lavish displays of gifts and large cash donations, while their participation reaches its climax in the Rite of Universal Salvation 普渡 (Pǔdù) that caps the Jiào cycle, with each temple responsible for its own vast Pǔdù altar, as the offerings (especially of whole pigs, nowadays usually rented rather than bought outright) often represent the single most

expensive item in the Jiào program. As I have written in greater detail elsewhere about the Jiào and its heretofore overlooked aspects, I wish to emphasize that the large-scale Daoist rites which directly reproduce the Daoist ritual cosmos encompassing the Common Religion directly depend upon precinct alliance networks among temples, and thus point to a fundamental relationship between Daoist ritual and temple network organization.

As part of this overall cultural system, custom also mandates that the Jiào must be prefaced by a series of Red-Headed (Tantric-Popular) Ritual Master ceremonies to purify the temple and deploy additional spiritual armies around the temple precinct. [29] When a temple is consecrated, or before a Jiào is performed in a recently renovated temple, the "killer spirits" 煞神(sùah sheeń)

[29] Usually, prior to commencement of a Jiào, a temple will deploy added spirit-soldiers 放兵 in outer camps 外營. In many instances this involves installation of an "upper" Five Camps 上五營 headed by Daoist Prime Marshals (Wēn 溫, Kāng 康, Mǎ 馬 [or sometimes Gāo 高] and Zhào 趙), rather than the Tantric masters (aka "Four Saints" 四聖, 張蕭劉連) of what this Daoist nomenclature regards as the "lower" or ordinary Five Camps. But often in rural townships, this outer camp may not feature any such Daoist version, but instead constitutes a major recruitment of new spectral spirit-soldiers under the regular Five Camps of the Ritual Master tradition. Spirit-soldiers are recuited from the swarms of orphan ghosts –unworshipped dead believed to reside in the ocean or rivers. This ritual is sometimes called Inviting [from] Water Water 請水 (舀水 Kat Tzueè, "Ladeling Water"), and sometimes called Inviting Fire and Summoning Armies 請火招軍. Though there are different procedures implied by these two names, in both a Ritual Master plants a flag by the waterside which invites the orphan ghosts to come, and then opens his altar and summons the Five Camps, after which the medium usually wades into the water and assisted by temple personnel scoops an urn of water while simulating a struggle, implying that the god must literally impress these ghosts into military service. The urn of water is then believed to contain the souls of these orphan ghosts. Sometimes the Spirit-medium (i.e. the god) is aided in this process of forcible recruitment by a spiritual press-gang of veteran spirit-soldiers that have been first detached from the temple's Ancestral Temple in a separate rite called Supplementing [Spirit-] Troops 補兵. But despite these overtones of compulsion, the recruitment of new spirit-soldiers from the water is seen as benefitting these ghosts, as they are given the opportunity to become spirit-soldiers of the Five Camps under an "orthodox" god's 正神 incense burner, where they enjoy incense and offerings and thus cast off their pitiable state. This implies their conversion from the status of ghost to that of minor god. All of these rites may well take place without any connection to a Jiào. For example, after a veteran Spirit-medium dies, it is believed that he in essence takes the god's spirit-soldiers with him, so after a new Spirit-medium has emerged from training then new spirit-soldiers must be recruited. Likesise sometimes a temple's god, through mediums or spirit-writing will order his or her temple to perform this rite, as people also believe that spirit-soldiers often defect from harsh army life, and therefore new spirit-soldiers must be periodically recruited. For most temples, the renewal of their own spirit-soldiers is achieved through the rite of Requesting Fire 請火 from the Ancestral Temple. On the waterside rite of Inviting Fire and Summoning Armies 請火招軍 see Zhōng Xiùjuàn 鍾秀雋. "厲鬼變神兵:「招軍請火」儀式中的神、鬼、人、兵將," 《世界宗教學刊》 22, (2013), (嘉義: 南華大學宗教學研究所), 95-185.

believed to reside in the soil and walls of buildings must be propitiated and sent off in culturally-mandated, Red Headed rites known variously as "Thanking the Earth" 謝土 or, more specifically "Gathering in the Killer-spirits" 收煞.[30] Likewise, the preliminary, one-day Fire Jiào 火醮 (huǒ jiào), meant to propitiate and divert the spiritual agents of fire is, upon closer examination, also a form of Daoist-brand Ritual Method ceremony, which employs formula from the *Dàofǎ Huìyuán* and *Fǎhaǐ Yìzhū* to effect the ritual's objectives.[31]

Then the Jiào itself is immediately prefaced by yet another classic Red-Headed ceremony of purification by burning oil 焚油逐穢, which features the same invocation (CXT 2 三界使者) and melody used by Ritual Masters of the Táinán-area Xújiǎ 徐甲 lineage-group. Thus while the intensely Ritual Method ceremony of the Announcement of the Memorial 發表 serves to spiritually purify the Jiào altar at the commencement of the Jiào proper, before this more subtle purification can begin, Red-Headed Ritual Master ceremony is, by custom, always performed first, and implies a separate, initial purification of the material dimensions of the temple itself, as well as the people involved in the rite and all the material objects involved by Ritual Master ceremony.

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[30] The Thanksgiving to the Earth 謝土 (aka Celebration of the Earth 慶土 etc.) involves "Sacrifice to the Killer-spirits" 祭煞, whereby these Killer-spirits 煞神 that live in the soil and inhabit buildings are offered propitiatory worship and then exorcistically sent off, thereby ensuring these dangerous Killer-spirits will not afflict anyone – as people offend and disturb these Killer-spirits when moving furniture, beginning construction work or moving earth. In homes, where this rite is also traditionally performed, the Thanksgiving to the Earth also signifies transfer of ownership and residence. Thus the previous "Master of the Foundation" 地基主 –believed by some (Daoist Priests) to be an unmarried or childless female ancestor unworshippable on the family altar, is sent away and replaced by a new spirit proper to the new family. In other words, the most fundamental relationship of occupation of space and the spiritual purity of the soil and buildings are, in Mínnán culture, specifically assigned to the martial and exorcistic tradition of the Ritual Master; even if Daoist Priests perform this rite, as they often do, they tie on the red headscarf of the Ritual Master and perform rites which are classical Daoist embellishments of Tantric-Popular Ritual Master ceremonies, replete with deities of Lűshān pantheons. Likewise, purification by boiling oil, usually called Firing Oil to Drive away Filth 焚油逐穢, is a fully Red-Headed rite in in which the Daoist Priest must tie on a red headband and sing the invocation for the Emissaries of the Three Realms 三界使者 in the same tune used of by the Ritual Master.

[31] Flanigan , forthcoming, "The Fire Jiào."

With rites to reward the spirit-troops performed at the conclusion of a long Jiào cycle, we see how the high Daoist Jiào itself is essentially bookended within a series of Red-Headed rites which function as important junctures between the domains of Popular and Daoist ritual.

Temple Religion in Táinán and its Environs: A Very Brief Introduction

The Common Religion is the system of local and regional cults to deified human beings and environmental spirits of in-and-of-place who are worshipped in temples, shrines and home altars, usually in groups of associate and subordinate gods under one or a group of main deities. Thus each temple, like the overall system, features a constellation of symbols arranged into flexible and spatially articulated hierarchies. In Táinán as elsewhere, these temples and altar-groups are joined in formal networks of several different kinds to form overlapping lateral and hierarchical alliance groups.[32] There are basically three kinds of temple alliance relationships: first there is in Táinán a custom unique to the Prefectural City called "united precincts" 聯境 (lên ginnˋ) system that was formed in the second half of the nineteenth century as a self-defense, civil patrol and mutual assistance system linked to the bǎo jiǎ household organization regime and formed among (more or less) spatially contiguous temple precincts. There are ten such united precincts systems

[32] In a 1977 paper entitled "Neighborhood Cult Associations in Traditional Tainan," Kristofer Schipper outlined a completely different form of religious organization known as the "god assembly" 神明會. This type of religious organization has markedly declined in Táinán over the past several decades. Curiously, Schipper does not mention these other forms of temple organization, despite their importance to the Daoist Jiào among other functions, and their histories, in most cases, extending to the Qīng and Japanese periods. See Kristofer Schipper, "Neighborhood Cult Associations in Traditional Tainan," in *The City in Late Imperial China,* ed. G.W. Skinner. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), 651-676.

in Táinán.[33]

Then there is the many-branching system of temple alliances called "assistance exchange precincts" 交陪境 (gāo bwei ginnǵ) whose connections are not spatial, but rather formed among personal ties between temple group members, and also among their deities as elicited by ritual and mediumistic interactions. These systems mostly took shape during the late Qīng and Japanese period (1895-1945), and many temples in Táinán proper have numbers of assistance-exchange-precinct temples in distant parts of Táinán County, the result of 19th C. patterns of pilgrimage, particularly to the famous Māzǔ temple in Běigǎng. Temples within a United Precinct network are also colloquially referred to as gāo bwei ginnǵ 交陪境, or assistance-exchange-precincts, but in fact people are clear about the distinction between the two kinds of temple alliances, even though modern ritual obligations among the two are largely identical. These primarily involve going to worship allied temple's deities on their birthdays (a formal process of setting out offerings making prostrations[34] called "planting candles 插燭 tsah jiǩ) and contributing to allied temples when they perform a Daoist Jiào 醮.

The need to organize manpower and resources required for a Jiào is among the main factors now stimulating the entire custom of forming and maintaining these various temple alliance systems, again indicating how the entire religion is essentially Daoist. These two kinds of temple alliance network form the main structure and impetus to larger religious events in Táinán: for example, ritual processions, especially those involved in and concluding a Jiào, are essentially a

[33] On the United Precincts see Xiè Qífēng 謝奇峰.《臺南府城聯境組織研究》(臺南市:南市文化局，民 102 [2013]).

[34] It is important to note that the ritual gesture of making prostrations or 磕首 is reserved, normally, for formal occasions and is especially limited to temple groups worshipping their own god on the god's birthday, and other

given temple's alliance network on display in linear fashion.

In addition to, or perhaps prior to these two forms of temple alliance, there is another, more basic form of community temple organization in which a "big" temple 大廟 (đua biuĥ) has its own precinct 境 which includes several satellite "corner" 角頭 (ǧak taú) neighborhoods and their temples that acknowledge the benevolent primacy of the "big temple" as the "precinct master" 境主 (ḡinng tzù). In the past, these temple precincts exerted much greater influence in terms of defining fund-raising turf, and determining where households worshipped and sought religious solutions to various life problems. Performance of the Middle Prime Rite of Universal Salvation 中元普度 is often the exclusive responsibility and expense of the precinct master temple, and usually only the big temple may establish Outer Five Camps shrines 外五營 outside the immediate temple premises. Informants report that in the past, big temples would delegate birthday and other ritual celebrations to the corner temples 角頭廟, and in turn the corner temples had a larger say in the direction of the big temple community. These same informants say that as control over the big temple tended toward centralization in the late 20th century, with power concentrated into a few families within the big temple, the relative influence of the corner temples diminished, and in turn the entire precinct organization increasingly ceased to function as a linked organization, as corner temples in turn sought greater degrees of autonomy relative to their "master of the precinct."

Nevertheless, the basic temple precinct around a large temple remains the major spatial unit defining the extent of ritual efficacy and community involvement. For example, during a Jiào, the temple's precinct is marked out by either a long strand of red lanterns, or in more traditional renditions a "see-no-heaven" 不見天, a continuous canopy of white cloth over a bamboo frame which encircles the precinct boundary and leads to the temple, allowing the orphan ghosts in the

precinct, who fear the Yáng energy of daytime sunlight, to approach the outer "Guānyīn Mountain altar 觀音山 and there, under the watchful eye of Prime Marshals, enjoy offerings without fear. In these ways a big temple demarcates its territory by shouldering the more expensive rites affecting the precint, and exercises executive primacy in terms of fund-raising and labor mobilization with regard to the other, smaller temples within their precinct.

It is important to note that the temple precinct or jìng 境 almost always forms the explicit parameter of ritual efficacy, which is to say the liturgy itself –including the Minor Rite Invitation of the Spirits ceremony, specifically indicates the scope of the ritual's benefits as extending to the precinct boundary. Hence in concrete terms the religion is explicitly oriented toward the ritual management of community space, whether the ritual is performed within the temple premises, or if gods are carried in procession to "tour the precinct" 遊境 (ȳiew ginnǹ, or 遶境 rào jìng).

In Táinán proper a few temples still identify themselves as belonging to a certain big temple's precinct, and in formal settings will preface their temple's name with both this temple precinct name and an old place-name associated with their own smaller temple, such as the Pǔjì Diàn Precint "Little Flower Garden" Héshèng Táng 普濟殿境花園仔和勝堂. In the city, this level of temple precinct organization tends to be informal and vestigial; the United Precinct systems and assistance-exchange-precinct networks are by contrast much more formal and exert far greater influence. In the County, however, the big-temple-corner-temple relationship predominates; normally the big temple will apportion seats on its temple committee to different corner temples according to household population. Hence, we may generally conclude that the strength and relevance of this more basic, spatial version of temple precinct organization depends on the active participation and influence of the smaller corner temples in the big temple's

management; the rise of managerial autonomy in recent decades has tended to diminish the power of a single, big temple's precinct organization, particularly in the city. The multiple precinct organizations, however, as both United Precincts 聯境 and assistance exchange precinct networks 交陪境 remain highly influential and form the organizational basis of the religion as a whole.

Figure 5.1 Example of Multiple forms of Temple Precinct Alliance in Táinán City, as centered on the Pǔjí Diàn 普濟殿:
1. United Precinct 聯境: collective unit, highly formal
2. Mutual Assistance Precinct [Alliance] 交陪境：between two temples, highly formal
3. Temple territorial precinct 某廟境：defined by main temple, now informal and weakest of the three.
Note: hierarchical relations of Ancestral Temple 祖廟 to "Division of Incense" 分香 temple are completely different and are not shown here.

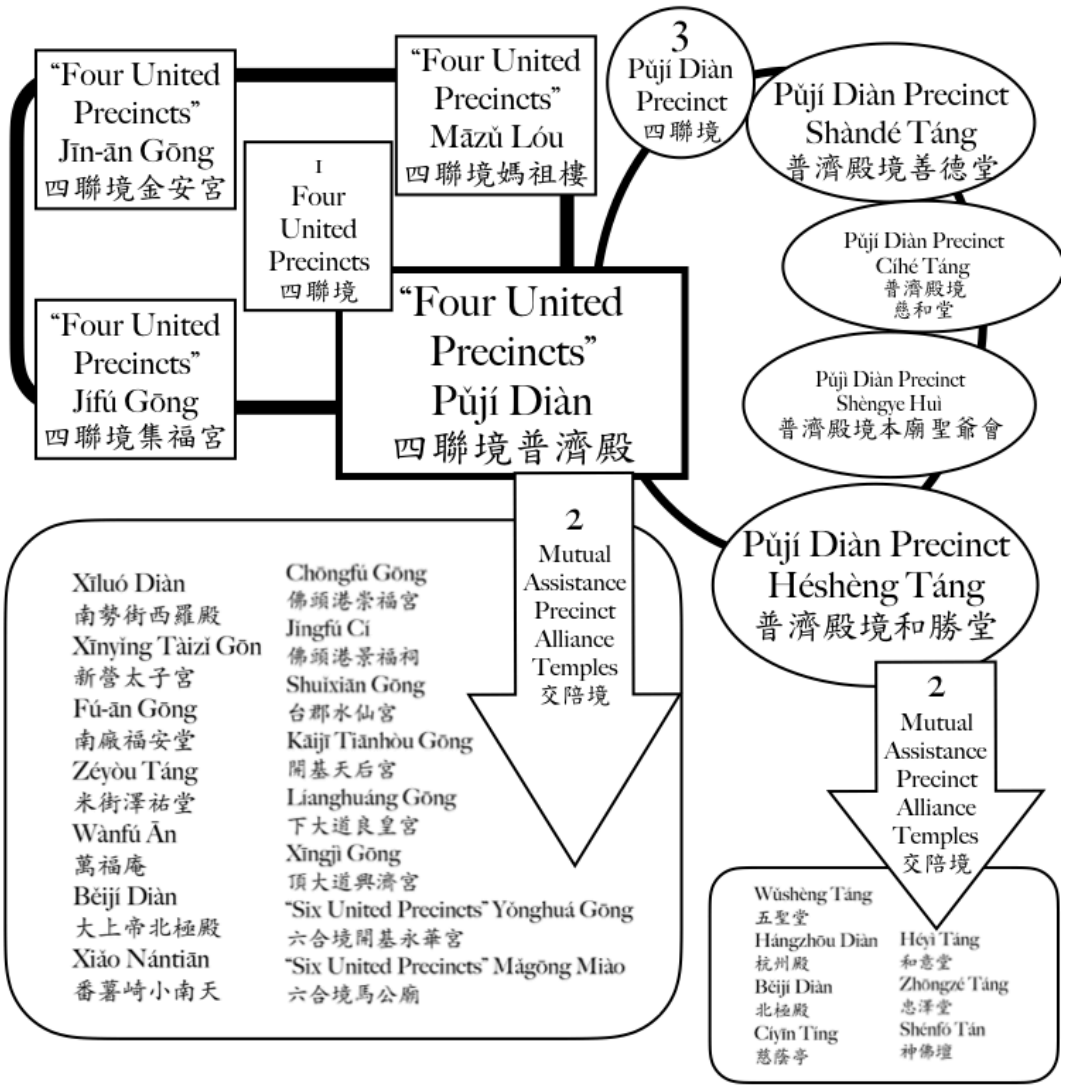

Table 5.1 United Precinct-alliances 聯境 Lián-Jìng of Táinán City

United Precinct	Main Temple / Precinct Temples		date temple founded	main deities	
廿一境 Èrshí Yī Jìng	北極殿	Běijí Diàn	明鄭時 (c.1663)	玄天上帝	Xuántiān Shàngdì
	福隆宮	Fú Lóng Gōng	嘉慶 7 年 (1802)	七星娘娘	Qīxīng Níang Níang
八協境 Bā Xíe Jìng	大人廟	Dà Rén Miào	康熙 55 年(1715)	朱池李三府千歲	The Three Royal Sires Zhū, Chí and Lǐ
	東嶽殿	Dōng Yuè Diàn	明永歷 27 (1673)	東嶽大帝	Dōngyuè Dàdì
	福隆宮	Fú Lóng Gōng	明鄭時 (1661-1683)	保生大帝	Bǎo Shēng Dà Dì
	彌陀寺	Mí Túo Sì	明永歷間 (c.1680)	阿彌陀佛	Ā Mí Túo Fó (The Buddha Maitreya)[1]
	龍山寺	Lóng Shān Sì	明鄭時 (1661-1683)	觀世音菩薩	Boddhisattva Guān Yīn
	聖公廟	Shèng Gōng Miào	康熙 57 (1718)	鄭成功	Zhèng Chénggōng aka Koxinga[2]
	龍泉井廟	Lóng Quán Jǐng Miào	嘉慶 22 (1817)	土地公	Tǔdì Gōng/清水祖師 Qīngshuǐ Zǔshī
	祝三多廟	Zhù Sān Dúo Miào	康熙 56 (1717)	福德正神	Fúdé Zhèngshén (土地公 Tǔdì Gōng)
六合境 Liù Hé Jìng	開山王廟	Kāishān Wáng Miào	康熙中葉 (c.1700)	延平君王	Yánpíng Jūnwáng i.e. 鄭成功 Koxinga
	永華宮	Yǒng Huá Gōng	乾隆 17 (1750)	廣澤尊王	Guǎngzé Zūnwáng
	清水寺	Qīngshuǐ Sì	康熙年間(c.1700)	清水祖師	Qīngshuǐ Zǔshī
	馬公廟	Mǎ Gōng Miào	康熙年間 (c.1700)	輔順將軍馬仁	General Mǎ Rén[3]
	仁厚境福德祠 Rénhòu Jìng Fúdé Cí		n.d.	福德正神	Fúdé Zhèngshén (土地公 Tǔdì Gōng)
	油行尾福德爺廟 Fúdé Yé Miào		乾隆年間 (c.1770)	福德正神	Fúdé Zhèngshén (土地公 Tǔdì Gōng)
	大埔福德祠 Dàpǔ Fúdé Cí		道光 22 年(1842)	福德正神	Fúdé Zhèngshén (土地公 Tǔdì Gōng)

[1] This and the following Buddhist temple, both of which have monastics and practice orthodox monastic Buddhism, do not participate in other temple's events, such as gods' birthdays etc.

[2] According to Academia Sinica's survey, this temple (now) worships 開漳聖王 Kāi Zhāng Shèng Wáng, the Holy King who Opened Zhāng[zhōu], but the 1933 Japanese-era survey《臺南州祠廟名鑑》(*Mirror of Temple Names in Táinán Prefecture*) lists Zhèng Chénggōng. See http://crgis.rchss.sinica.edu.tw/temples/TainanCity/east/2101007-SGM (retrieved 5/2017).

[3] Mǎ Rén 馬仁, of Chén Yuánguāng's 陳元光 (i.e. Kāi Zhāng Shèng Wáng 開漳聖王) generals.

六興境 Liù Xīng Jìng	開山廟	Kāi Shān Miào	明鄭時 (1661-1683)	保生大帝	Bǎo Shēng Dà Dì
	慈蔭亭	Cí Yīn Tíng	康熙 56 (1717)	觀音佛祖	Guānyīn Fózǔ (佛祖媽 but-tzou mà)
	保西宮	Bǎo Xī Gōng	康熙 57 (1718)	葉朱李三府千歲	Three Royal Sires Yè, Zhū, and Lǐ (Wángye)
六和境 Liù Hé Jìng	祀典武廟	Registry of Sacrifices Martial Temple	康熙 9 年 (1670)	關聖帝君	Guān Shèng Dìjūn
	靈佑宮	Líng Yòu Gōng	康熙 10 年 (1671)	玄天上帝	Xuántiān Shàngdì
八吉境 Bā Jí Jìng	保和宮	Bǎo Hé Gōng[4]	明永歷 15 (1661)	池府千歲	Chífǔ Qiānsuì
	朝興宮	Cháo Xīng Gōng	咸豐元年 (1850)	媽祖	Māzǔ
	總趕宮	Zǒng Gǎn Gōng	明鄭時 (1661-1683)	倪聖王	Holy King Nì (ship-protecting Wángye)
	五帝廟	Wǔ Dì Miào	明鄭時 (1661-1683)	五顯大帝	Grand Emperor of the Five Manifestations
	昆沙宮	Kūn Shā Gōng	康熙 24 (1685)	三太子	The Third Prince Lǐ
	重慶寺	Chóng Qìng Sì	明鄭時 (1661-1683)	釋迦, 文殊, 普賢	Shakyamuni, Manjushri, Samantabhadra
	關帝廳	Guān Dì Tīng	康熙年間 (late 17th C)	關聖帝君	Guān Shèng Dìjūn (Guān Gōng)
十八境 Shíbā Jìng	縣城隍廟	County-level City God Temple	咸豐 10 年(1860)	城隍爺	Chéng Huáng Yé
四安境 Sì Ān Jìng	良皇宮	Liang Huang Gōng	明鄭時 (1661-1683)[5]	保生大帝	Bǎo Shēng Dà Dì
	南廠保安宮	Nánchǎng Bǎo Ān Gōng	康熙 57 (1718)	五府千歲	Wǔfú Qiānsuì (李池吳朱范王爺 Wángye)
	神興宮	Shén Xīng Gōng (1935 three temples merged)		朱邢李三千歲, 吳老爺	Zhū, Xíng, Lǐ Wángye, Sire Wú
三協境 Sān Xié Jìng	風神廟	Fēng Shén Miào (Wind God Temple)		風神爺	Fēngshén Yé (Sire Wind God)
	南沙宮	Nán Shā Gōng	乾隆 11 (1746)	黃府千歲, 包公	Huáng Wángye, Bāo Gōng
	金華府	Jīn Huá Fǔ	康熙年間 (late 17th-early 18th C)	李馬黃三王爺, 關公	Lǐ, Mǎ, Huáng Wángye, Guān Gōng
	藥王廟	Yào Wáng Miào	康熙 57 (1718)	藥王大帝	Grand Emperor Medicine King (盤古 Pángǔ)

[4] Beginning in 1919, the Japanese administration constructed and repeatedly enlarged Táinán State-Shinto (Táinán Shén Shè 臺南神社) adjoining the original site of the Bǎo Hé Gōng, forcing the temple to relocate four times, the final being in 1935, at which time the temple's gods were housed in the no longer extant Yín Tóng Zǔ Miào 銀同祖廟 . In 1946 the Bǎo Hé Gōng was merged with the Suaīh-â-nā Cháo Xīng Gōng 檨仔林朝興宮.

[5] Early gazetteers for Taiwan, both the Kāngxī 24 (1684) *Kāngxī Fújiàn Complete Gazetteer, Táiwān Prefecture* 《康熙福建通志》 and the Kāngxī 25 (1685) *Gazetteer of Táiwān Prefecture* both report the temple's existence, and call it 慈濟宮, the name Bǎoshēng Dà Dì's ancestral temple in Tóngān County, which is in turn the name used by many branch temples. Xiè Qífēng (2013:257) concludes both references are to the Liáng Huáng Gōng based on the place-names used in these early gazetteers.

四聯境 Sì Lían Jìng	普濟殿	Pǔ Jì Diàn 明鄭時	(1661-1683)	池府千歲	Chífǔ Qiānsuì (Dee-hù tsen-sueĭ)
	媽祖樓	Māzǔ Loú 乾隆 17 前	(prior to 1753)	媽祖	Māzǔ
	金安宮	Jīn Ān Gōng 嘉慶 14	(1809)[6]	媽祖	Māzǔ
	集福宮	Jí Fú Gōng 乾隆元年	(1736)	玄天上帝	Xuántiān Shàngdì (plus many Wángye)
	崇福宮	Chōng Fú Gōng		玄天上帝	Xuántiān Shàngdì

[6] Xie Qífēng reports that during the Qiánlóng period (1735-1795) merchants from Jīnchuān 金川 and soldiers from Jīnmén 金門 brought two spirit-images of Māzǔ which were first worshipped in home altars and which became the "Second Mother" 二媽 and "Third Mother" 三媽 spirit-images in the temple.

Thus, there are three related and overlapping kinds of temple precinct relationships that are metaphorically lateral in nature by virtue of their spatial and (primarily) fraternal basis. Then there is a completely different, vertical axis of temple hierarchy based on spiritual genealogy, in which an older and more famous temple serves as the "Ancestral Temple" 祖廟 (tzou biuh) from whose deity and incense hearth other altar groups are born and establish their own temples through a process called "Division of Incense" 分香 (fēn xiāng/ hun hieūh). In this process, new spirit-images are animated in the Ancestral Temple (ideally in the lead-up to the god's birthday) in most cases by a Ritual Master, but also by Daoist priests. Then a spoonful of burning incense powder or incense ash from the Ancestral Temple's main incense burner –together with an invisible detachment of spirit-soldiers recruited from the Ancestral Temple's spirit armies– are transferred to a small portable incense brazier and then carefully carried back to the new branch altar. From this point on the branch altar must maintain an ongoing relationship of pilgrimage and renewal with the Ancestral Temple.[35] Returning to the Ancestral Temple is a particular form of Presenting Incense 進香 called Visiting the Ancestral Temple 謁祖廟.When a spirit-image returns to its Ancestral Temple, it must "pass over the incense-burner" 過爐 and then be placed on or beside the main altar to "charge up" for a period of time. If it is a formal Visit to the Ancestral Temple 謁祖廟, then they will "Request Fire" 請火 and thereby renew their god's incense hearth –and the temple's cohorts of spirit-soldiers, by again receiving a spoon of burning incense powder from the Ancestral Temple's incense burner to be taken back to the branch temple. This basic act

[35] Normally after animating a new spirit image the new image of the god, regardless of whether it is worshipped in a temple or home altar, must for the first three years make annual pilgrimages to Visit the Ancestral Temple 謁祖廟. After the third year's obligatory pilgrimage, subsequent visits are determined by asking the deity, either through a Spirit-medium or casting the moonblocks.

of renewing a temple's incense-hearth by pilgrimage to the Ancestral Temple, with its intense emphasis on spatial and material relationships among (symbolically) living spirit-images and incense burners is among the most important ritual acts structuring and energizing the entire religious system.

The rites of animating spirit-images (Kāi Guāng 開光) and Requesting Fire are often performed by Ritual Masters, though Daoist priests often perform the Kāi Guāng as well, and Spirit-mediums normally supervise at least certain critical stages of the Requesting of Fire procedure. In the weeks before the birthday of an important deity, major temples with many division-of-incense branch temples 分香廟 such as the Xī Luó Diàn 西羅殿 will host many scores and and even hundreds of their branch temples, who each come separately (by busses and trucks), carrying their gods in procession, with a train of performance troupes and their Spirit-medium(s). Thus through these three kinds of overlapping organizational systems, at the community level the temples and altar groups of the Prefectural City and its environs are highly organized. [36]

If the temple precinct forms the circumference or bounded space of religious and social units, then the focus of the system is located in the altar, which we may regard as the most fundamental unit of the religion. In fact the religion is always materialized through altars but not necessarily always in a temple per se, as altars are found in homes, businesses, and small storefront shrines. Traditional homes were centered around the altar in the main central hall, and in this we are reminded that temples themselves are not only representative of government offices (the yámen)

[36] On Division of Incense and the development of temple networks in Fújiàn see Barend ter Haar, "The Genesis and Spread of Temple Cults in Fukien," in *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Vermeer, ed., E. B. Vermeer (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 349-396.

where judgements are rendered and power wielded; temples are the are also homes of the gods, and are, like the main guest-hall in a traditional home, places where people hang out.

The Altar

The most basic unit of the Common Religion is the altar, and not a temple per se. As such, an altar is needed to bring together the most basic components of cultic worship: an incense burner, a spirit-image or spirit-tablet, and some form of offerings, however simple or symbolic. The altar represents the physical surface enabling the assembly of these elements, which are like the organs of a living being, and must function in unison for there to be a living cult. Of these, the incense burner is the most fundamental, and cultic worship can, in its most reduced form, involve no more than the veneration of a pouch of incense ash taken from a temple's incense burner. But it is more common for such ash to be placed into an incense burner where the incense fire, which embodies the living presence of the god, can continue to burn. And as a spirit-image involves a certain capital investment, in some domestic altars and temples, a spirit-tablet of some kind, even of paper and placed in a stack of spirit-money, can suffice as the representation and abode of the deity.

Offerings are also essential to maintaining the responsive, living presence of the deity, and at a minimum there should be (usually three) cups of water or tea leaves. On the first and fifteenth of each lunar month, it is generally expected that there should be additional offerings of fruit or other food items, though again these could be maintained daily, and supplemented with cakes, crackers, candies and so forth. These offerings are not merely essential to nourishing the spirit and securing their presence at the altar, all such food offerings are sacramental, and are eaten with the knowledge that in enjoying the offerings, the deity has blessed the food by its presence, and

through eating these blessed offerings worshippers then internalize this spiritual blessing, a process generally referred to as "eating peace-and-safety" 吃平安 This consumption of blessed offerings constitutes a major aspect of religious practice, and is featured in virtually every act of worship, from the simplest of temple bài bài 拜拜 to lavish sacrificial feasts, and extends to the candies, fruit, and cookies distributed by a wide range of ritual performers –from Daoist priests (in the Rite of Universal Salvation), Ritual Masters (when Rewarding the Troops), and during ritual processions to Spirit-generals 將爺, Eight-Family-Generals 八家將 troupes, as well as the small children dressed as gods who are carried atop the Centipede Troupe 蜈蚣陣 and throw candy to onlookers. Even banquets given at the end of a Jiào or on god's birthday are regarded as "eating peace-and-safety" even though the food is not specifically offered to the gods first, but rather broadly included in the ritual proceedings. The sacramental value of food thus is expressed in a range of settings, all of which draw from the basic experience of placing offerings on an altar for deities (as well as ancestors and ghosts) to enjoy and bless with their presence.

Thus the living cult of a god, or ancestors for that matter, are realized in this basic trio of cultic elements assembled on an altar: the incense burner, a spirit-image or tablet, and offerings. In manifesting the presence of the deity, who is in most cases after all, understood to be the spirit of a former human being, or otherwise highly anthropomorphized, this trio of cultic elements suggests a vision of a human being, who has a body (the spirit-image) which must be nourished (by offerings) to sustain the vital spirit (the incense fire) which animates the body and persists after death, and can be transferred to other bodies.

Beyond this trio of cultic elements whereby the living presence of the spirit is established, the single most important and commonplace item employed at the altar is the pair of crescent-

shaped divination blocks, usually called "cups" 杯 (bweî), which people will pass through the incense and then toss to obtain yes or no answers to whatever question they have submitted to the god. The centrality of the divination blocks underscores the fundamental nature and premises of the religion, as the gods are immanent, and actively communicate with their devotees through a variety of modalities of which the divination blocks are by far the most common, and are found in domestic and temple altars. As receiving communication from the gods is among the most important aspects of the religion, these divination blocks are the most basic addition to or extension of the fundamental trio of cultic elements.

As sacred, non-ordinary items, and vessels of the gods' intersubjective presence, the trio of fundamental cultic elements and their assembly on the altar itself must be ritually established and maintained for there to be a viable and responsive cult. Of these, the animation of the spirit-image(s), or "Opening the Light" 開光 (kāi guāng) usually involves the most formal ritual procedure and culminates a series of shorter ceremonies whereby the entire process of fashioning and enlivening the image is punctuated by ritual stages. The "Settling of the [incense] Burner" 安爐 (ān lú) and the overall consecration of the altar, called "Settling the Seat [of the god]" 安坐(ān zuò) are generally far more flexible in their performance, with the important point being that there is a ritual performed, so that the altar as a whole is installed as a crystallization of the sacred time, power, and presence evoked in ritual. Once installed, items on the altar cannot be casually moved or touched. As the sacred is a product of ritual, the altar must be approached through ritual gestures, of even the most simple and perfunctory sort, so as to preserve the distinction between the sacred and the ordinary on which the special power of the god, and of ritual action, depend.

Aside from these most basic cultic elements, the most important factor structuring the altar is the language of spatial relationships expressed in (and around) the altar, and which are rooted in the central axis of the altar itself, which in its most ideal expressions is the central axis of the room, hall, or building in which the altar is situated. Every altar is structured first and foremost around this primary central axis, upon which the trio of cultic elements –and especially the spirit-image(s) and incense burner– are always carefully and exactingly positioned. Any time a spirit-image is moved from its altar and then returned, while someone places the spirit-image on the altar, others will stand farther out, straddling this central axis, and guiding the placement of the spirit-image so that it is placed exactly upon this central line, often with considerable minute adjustments until deemed correct. So critical is the placement of the spirit-image and incense burner on this central axis that recently it has become increasingly common to use a surveyor's laser sight to pinpoint this central axis.

While the central axis defines the optimal placement for the main cultic elements, it also establishes a universal language of hierarchy as expressed in spatial relationships relative to the central axis. First, this longitudinal axis divides the altar into right ("dragon side" 龍邊 lóng biān) and left ("tiger side" 虎邊 hǔ biān) sides, in which the central position is the most important, with the next highest on the right-hand (facing-in) dragon side, with the left-hand tiger side still lower than the right.

In this articulation of space, all three dimensions are meaningful: left and right, up and down, forward and back as measured from this primary central axis and its apex at the main deity's most elevated spirit-image. Thus, if there are many spirit images, the "biggest" is literally the highest, and will also be the farthest back, with relatively less elevated spirit-images placed lower

and farther forward. In temples, this logic extends further outward to the guardian spirits placed farther out on the central altar-table, and downward nearer to or on the ground, where Sire Tiger 虎爺 (hǔ ye) is usually enshrined.

The vertical articulation of spiritual hierarchy is often expressed in the placement and nature of offerings together with their respective symbols. For example, in the special worship of the Jade Emperor called "Worshiping Sire Heaven" 拜天公 (bài tēēh gōng), if conducted in a temple, a yellow banner with the Jade Emperor's name is hung high over the main gods' altar, and a special, tiered altar-table is usually set up facing outward so that offerings can be placed higher than the level normal for the temple's local deities. Conversely, if there are offerings for more lowly spirits, such as Sire Tiger (the one principle animal spirit in the Mín-Tái Common Religion), or the malevolent Killer-spirits 煞 (shà/ suaȟ) of the soil, then their raw offerings are placed on the ground. Ghosts and spirits of the dead in general –including the Spirit-soldiers of the Five Camps– are offered oblations poured on the ground; even the ghost-horses of the Five Camps are likewise given grass on the ground. These spatial and symbolic distinctions articulate a structural differentiation of hierarchy, with degrees of elevation indicating the relative purity (vis-à-vis death pollution) and authority of the spirits involved, but not necessarily their sheer, effective power.

In fact, in the traditional religious culture, the more "lowly" spirits of virtually any pantheon or hierarchy are often the most dangerous and therefore the most immediately powerful. Hence the troublesome Killer-spirits are intensely feared, and held responsible for all manner of disease, while the humble Spirit-soldiers form the business-end of the whole symbolic system. Likewise, other subaltern spirits like the Five Furies 五猖 studied by Guo Qitao are potent and fearsome in ways that render them useful, symbolically and socially, to the higher local gods to whom they are

subordinated. This same equation of immediate power with relatively lower status also manifests in the basic relationship of local spirits and their Spirit-mediums relative to the high, austere powers of the Daoist pantheon: the high gods are pure and untouched by death, "cool" and regal in unmoved grandeur; the more martial local gods, on the other hand, as well as the Prime Marshals of the Ritual Method, embody a "hotter" form of dynamic power much closer to the untamed forces of violence and death, forces which can be marshalled to protect against spiritual malefactors –and heal the illnesses caused by them– in more directly effective ways than the distant bureaucratic authorities of the Daoist inner altar.

This vertical articulation of hierarchy is visible in many contexts, from the tiers of deities enshrined on temple altars, to the echelons of deities portrayed in painted scrolls, and is also replicated in the linear liturgical sequences of rituals for invoking the gods, again with Ritual Method spirits frequently opening the way as an exorcistic vanguard. Ultimately this same spatial hierarchy applies to the human participants, with the most important or those of highest status standing front and center. Hence this fundamentally spatial language of hierarchy is arguably the single most important factor shaping the form and arrangement of the altar itself, of temples, and of the rituals whereby these outposts of the sacred are established and maintained.

Because the altar is a crystallization of the rituals which created its sacra and installed them in place, to approach an altar is to enter ritual spheres of behavior. From daily worship to birthday offerings, changing a spirit-image's clothes or moving the god through space, every step must be enclosed within ritual. Nothing regarding the "golden body" 金身(gēem sheeñ) of a god is done unceremoniously. A spirit-image without an altar is an orphan with no power and no community; if for whatever reason maintenance of an altar becomes inconvenient, most people will send

unworshipped spirit-images to certain temples for safekeeping, like the Táinán Dōng Yuè Diàn 東嶽殿, where a vast store of images without altars have essentially "gone to die," kept in an underground room in the temple of the underworld.

Thus altars represent the most basic unit of the entire religious system, as all of these elements: spirit-images, an incense hearth, offerings, and a consecrated space (however small) to put them are all required for the basic practice of the religion, and it is the altar that brings everything together. When gods are carried out in procession, their sedan chairs are invariably equipped with incense burners or a receptacle for incense, and are usually accompanied by small images of subordinate deities, animated flags of command, and other altar items like flowers. Thus even when the gods are removed from the altars on which they sit, their palanquins too are in fact portable altars, as the gods are inseparable from their incense hearths, and never function without their numerous subordinates.

Referring to the altar as a synecdoche of the whole system further emphasizes the relationship of the spirit-image(s) to its immediate space: the objects which surround the image, how this space is approached, entered, moved, reproduced and so on, which is to say expressed and maintained through highly aesthetic, multi-media and materially intensive ritual performance. Even when there is no particular ritual going on, the altar arrangement is essentially an art installation created through ritual, occupying the focal point of an altar group, a material manifestation ritual acts that indicates the ongoing presence of ritual's time-out-of-time, ready to be opened again.

At a fundamental level, there is an essential aesthetic and material dimension within the religion: the placement of spirit-images, their clothes and crowns, the decorative appointments of

the temple itself, all the material objects from lanterns and flags to costumes, ritual implements, musical instruments, sedan-chairs and all the different kinds of spirit-images at the focus of worship, this vast wealth of material culture is deployed according to exacting and sensitive standards of aesthetic value, requiring coordination among spatial and musical aspects of ritual performance and visual display.

Any time an altar item is moved, especially (living) spirit-images, great care is taken to return it to a position deemed symmetrical, and befitting the dignity and beauty of the altar space. The intense emphasis on aesthetics and spatial proportions is directly linked, I believe, to the conceptions of the religion's efficacy, as this is linked to the transfer of substances among bodies, and as such involves both sympathetic magic of resemblance (among spirit-images, Spirit-mediums, worshippers and substitute bodies) and contact magic (as in the use of ritual implements like the whip to purify someone, or consecrated brushes to animate a spirit-image). Sympathetic and contact magic both function through the symbol of the body, and as bodies must be brought into certain kinds of relationship for both modes of magic to function, the aesthetic arrangement of sacred items and of human bodies is just as essential to the creation of religious efficacy as is the pairing of ritual language and ritual gesture. In this way the ability for ritual and performance to affect bodies, both human and spiritual, is affirmed in and derived from the patterned ordering of ritual bodies and material objects on the altar and in ritual performance. The metaphors of order produced in the aesthetics of altar arrangements and ritual performance denote the hoped-for ordering of human bodies in the world.

Beyond issues or ritual efficacy, the intense aesthetic dimension of the religion is directly related to ritual's other major products: dignity, status, and prestige. The artistically intensified

space of an altar or a ritual performance is both edifying and a marker of prestige made desirable by its display of cultural capital. Thus, in the variables of ritual, which Rappaport argues serve to indicate the social status of the participants, a more sumptuous ritual with finer music or a more deservedly famous theater troupe and so on will, by such aesthetic enhancements directly denote the elevated status of the ritual's sponsors.[37] In this way the cultural economy of ritual, material displays of all kinds tend toward ostentation, and open a range of choices regarding taste and affordability. In contemporary Táiwān, active temple members consume a tremendous amount of fairly expensive performance-art, and in a socially-competitive atmosphere standards and expectations run high, though sometimes values are expressed through quantity and extravagance rather than quality and refinement.

The Birthdays of the Gods: Maintenance of the temple-cult and its relations

In its ritual cycles and social organization, the Common Religion is primarily oriented around the birthdays of the gods, and though many of the rituals performed on such occasions occur at other times as well, at most temples on the birthdays of gods certain rituals are considered necessary and indispensable for the maintenance of the temple cult. Moreover, gods' birthdays are the principal occasion in which temple precinct alliances come into play, outside the more periodic, but vastly more intensive mobilization involved in a Daoist Jiào.

On the eve of the gods' birthday the temple (or altar community) will usually hire one or more performance groups to play music or perform operas and puppet theater directly before the

[37] Roy Rappaport, *Ritual and religion in the making of humanity* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 52-4; 82-89.

gods' altar or in the street, with an especially sumptuous and decorative array of offerings laid out on the main offering table before the altar. Though the entertainments vary, the most important events are the formal rituals that affirm both the temple's alliance network relationships and the living cult of their deity. On the eve of the god's birthday, if it is their main god (and not one of the numerous associate spirits of the temple, whose birthdays are also marked by Daoist and/or Minor Rite ceremonies) then during the early evening the other temple-groups of the host temple's alliance network (交陪境 gāo bwei ginnˋ) come one by one to congratulate the god on their birthday with a stereotyped sequence of offerings and prostrations called "planting candles" 插燭 (tsa jiǩ).

In this custom, allied temples make a formal procession to the temple holding birthday celebrations, complete with a truck of musicians who "Open the Road" 開路 with the loudly amplified sounds of the suǒ-nà clarinet, drum and gong. In keeping with the fundamental premise of inflecting ritual time, when the procession stops at a traffic light, the music pauses as well, and resumes when setting off again. Behind this truck, in the city, temple members usually go on foot, led by two men carrying what are now specially made battery-powered lights with the name of the temple painted on them, followed by two more men shouldering the long embroidered banner of their temple's main god. More traditional temples have sets of shoulder-carried boxes in which they carry mounds of offerings and their own incense and altar implements to be used in the rite of Planting Candles (no spirit-images are ever carried, however). When the procession arrives at an intersection leading to the temple, fireworks are set off so that the allied temple enters with great fanfare, and in a fixed custom, the host temple will light a long strand of firecrackers hung from a pole, and then drag this exploding strand of firecrackers while leading the visiting temple group

into their temple courtyard, all while the amplified truck blares away with musical accompaniment.

Usually, there is an unbroken succession of allied temple groups who come in pre-arranged sequences, and when each enters, there is a round of fond greetings and a genuine rush to assemble the offerings and incense which each allied temple brings. In essence, the formality of the temple alliance is enacted by each allied temple bringing their own incense-burner into the host temple, where they set up their own flowers, candles, and heaps of special offerings (by custom certain cakes and similar items made from rice, etc.), and usually a banner naming the temple, with the centerpiece a wreath of flowers and, curiously, fresh red chili peppers. When this scramble to create a well-ordered altar display is complete (each visiting temple arranges their own things), then it is time for a formal round of "Three bows and nine prostrations" 三拜九磕首禮, in which someone at the host temple uses a microphone to call out the instructions to bow, kneel, "knock the head," rise, and again bow, all to the accompaniment the amplified musicians on the truck, who watch from the courtyard and follow the proceedings so as to supply the musical inflection proper to ritual performance.

Like the temporary installation of the visiting allied temple's incense within the host temple, this round of prostrations is the other principle act which expresses and reproduces the formal bond of alliance between two temples. This act of three bows and nine prostrations signifies a degree of collective identity with a particular deity, and as such this round of prostrations is a highly significant practice at the center of the alliance structure.

When the prostrations are finished, the host temple treats each visiting allied temple group to a simple meal of stewed noodles 魯麵, while the host temple then quickly but carefully dismantles the allied temple's altar pieces and returns them to their carrying boxes, and sets the

offerings aside so that the next allied temple can proceed with their own quick-time arrangements and prostrations.

These formal visits by allied temples usually transpire from about 6 to 8 pm on the eve of the god's birthday. When these have concluded, often a Northern Reed 北管 troupe will set up and perform outside the temple, facing the deity and aligned on the central axis, for an hour or so. By about nine-thirty, it is customary in most temples in Táinán and Ānpíng for a Minor Rite Troupe to perform a Celebration of Longevity 祝壽 (zhù shoù/ǰiok shiewī) ceremony, with the final, culminating stage performed (ideally) at the traditional midnight hour of 11pm.[38]

In Táinán proper, a Minor Rite Celebration of Longevity is essentially a performance of the Purification of the Altar 清壇 (aka Invitation of the Spirits 請神, and also called Unfolding of the Altar 羅壇 , all names referring to the same ritual), to which a further sequence of additional invocations is added, featuring the stanza for the god being celebrated. Unlike all other Minor Rite performance, the final Celebration of Longevity sequence is performed kneeling. During this portion of the rite, which (symbolically and/or literally) coincides with the actual advent of the god's birthday at 11pm, it is normal for other temple members and quite often substantial numbers of other people to also clasp incense and kneel for the duration of the rite, rising only when the Minor Rite troupe does at the very end, then planting their incense in the gods' incense burner (or, the Lord of Heaven Incense Burner 天公爐). In the case of large temples like the Pǔjì Diàn 普濟殿 and the Xīluó Diàn 西羅殿, there are typically over well over 100 people who fill the sizeable courtyard and kneel during this part of the ceremony.

[38] At the 子 zǐ hour, 11pm-1am.

In terms of participation by ordinary worshippers, this is somewhat remarkable, as there is no such corresponding parallel participation among large numbers of temple members and ordinary devotees in any Daoist ritual conducted by Daoist priests, save the crowds that gather for the climactic moment of the Rite of Universal Salvation to snatch food items and money thrown by the priests to the crowd, who only gather for this portion of the rite, and disperse as soon as it concludes.

Table 5.2 Outline of the (typical) Hé Shèng Táng Invocation of the Spirits Ceremony

和勝堂請神儀式

1. Opening of Altar 開壇 sequence performed by Central Reverend (i.e. Ritual Master), with troupe call-and response echoing each stage's final command

Central Reverend (CR) burns incense to temple deities (normal 拜拜 worship sequence)
CR writes the three talismans with snuffed-out incense stick
CR cracks the Celestial Ruler to open ritual time and simultansously burns Incense Burner Talisman while pronouncing the invocation for this operation 爐符密咒
CR burns Purification Talisman into cup of water while reciting invocation 符水密咒
CR consecrates talisman-water with invocation 敕水密咒
CR sprays talisman water first away from and then toward the altar while using the left hand to point with the sword mudra 劍訣
CR burns Salt-rice Talisman into the salt-rice with invocation 鹽米密咒
CR scatters consecrated salt-rice with invocation 散鹽米密咒
CR consecrates Celestial Ruler and invokes emissaries 天皇吃密咒
CR consecrates Seven-Star sword with invocation 七星劍密咒
CR consecrates Saint Golden Whip with invocation 聖者密咒
CR cracks the whip three times, more extensive troupe call-and-response, pronounces ritual purpose in conclusion of this segment, immediate segue to HST 1:1

2. Invocation of Male Gods 男神

Jade Void	玉虛	HST 1:1	chanted, not sung
United Altar	合壇	HST 1:2	Three Altars 三壇 pantheon leads ritual performance
Ancestral Master Clearwater	清水祖師	HST 1:3	1:3,4 markers of transmission-lineage
Holy King who Opened Táiwān	開台聖王	HST 1:4	deified Zhèng Chénggōng

Chí (Deé) Wángye	池府千歲	HST 1:15	lord of the precinct 境主, 普濟殿
Xúantiān Shàng Dì	玄天上帝	HST 1:5	main temple deity （1）
Bǎoshēng Dàdì	保生大帝	HST 1:6	adapted Root Altar 本壇 Tantric subordinate pantheon
Prince Nuózhà (Ṭuh Chiâ)	哪吒太子	HST 1:7	faster tempo
Reverend King Liú (Laú)	劉府尊王	HST 1:8	1:8-10 HST temple deities
Reverend King Huáng (Hn̍g)	黃府尊王	HST 1:9	
Reverend King Lǐ (Leè)	李府尊王	HST 1:10	main temple deity （2）
Guān Gōng	文衡聖帝	HST 1:13	sometimes omitted
Wú (Gñoh̍) Wángye	吳府千歲	HST 1:16	affiliated temple deity (五聖堂), others (HST1:17-18) sometimes also included
Lord of the Rite Zhāng	張公大法主	HST 1:19	temple deity
The Earth God	福德正神	HST 1:20	
Marshal Zhào	玄壇元帥	HST 1:21	faster tempo
General Black Tiger	黑虎將軍	HST 1:22	5-character stanzas
Prime Marshal Ong̍ Suñ	王孫三相公	HST 1:23	standard closing invocation

(instruments placed back on the altar for an intermission between invocation of male gods and goddesses)

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3. Invocation of Goddesses 女神

After taking places, the ritual re-commences with a crack on the wooden drum-corner by the first-position drummer, and as if resuming from a previous invocation begins with "Spirit-soldiers..."

Buddha-Ancestor Guānyīn	觀音佛祖	HST 1:24	sung in Guānyīn melody
Empress of Heaven (Māzǔ)	天上聖母	HST 1:25	either beginning here or not until HST 1:29, change of melody from Guānyīn to HST goddess 女神 melody
Madame Línshuǐ	臨水夫人	HST 1:27	「媽也知」line emphasis （if sung in Guānyīn melody) as Black-Head tradition– group marker
Madame Chén	陳氏夫人	HST 1:28	Chén Jìng-gū
Madame Tsuă	蔡氏夫人	HST 1:29	possibly the Liúqiú goddess worshipped in Fúzhōu, bridge-rite subordinate pantheon
Goddess of the 7 Stars	七星玄女	HST 1:30	
Goddess Who Records Birth	註生娘媽	HST 1:31	
Immortal Lady Qín (Keeń)	勤氏仙姑	HST 1:32	1:32-36 Female Five Camps
Immortal Lady Hé (Huh̍)	何氏仙姑	HST 1: 33	
Immortal Lady Lǐ (Leè)	李氏仙姑	HST 1:34	

Immortal Lady Kì (Geè)	紀氏仙姑	HST 1:35	
Mysterious Woman of the Ninth Heaven	九天玄女	HST 1:36	
Lady Mother	娘媽 (娓娘媽)	HST 1:37	often sung in more dramatic Nánguǎn 南管 melody
Prime Marshal Ŀuh Chiâ	哪吒元帥	HST 1:38	standard conclusion to all Black-head tradition-group invocation of goddesses

4. Celebration of Longevity 祝壽 ʃiok shiewˉ, performed kneeling as a "third set" appended to the standard Invocation of Spirits ceremony

36 Generals and Officials	三十六官將	HST 1:39	
Invocation of deity whose birthday is being celebrated, if normally invoked in the liturgy, their invocation will be postponed to this position			
Saint Zhāng (Diõħ)	張聖者神咒	HST 1:49	
Saint Xiāo (Siaū)	蕭聖者神咒	HST 1:50	Tantric Saints of the Five Camps 五營
Saint Liú (Laú)	劉聖者神咒	HST 1:51	
Saint Lián (Leń)	連聖者神咒	HST 1:52	
Prime Marshal (Ŀuh Chiâ 哪吒元帥) of the 33rd Heaven	三十三天神咒	HST 1:53	variant of HST 1:38

On the day of the god's birthday, larger or wealthier temples will often have a Daoist priest troupe perform a one day Birthday Offering 生日醮 (shēng rì jiào) in the morning and afternoon. If no Daoists are to perform then frequently a lay scripture recitation group, either a hired, semi-professional troupe or a group recruited from the older women of the temple community, will perform a Buddhistic ceremony and recite scriptures in the morning and sometimes into the early afternoon. Because both the Daoist Birthday Jiào and the lay Scripture Recitation groups perform inside the temple, they are mutually-exclusive alternatives. Temples with sufficient funds, or with an established tradition of doing so will often provide several consecutive days of opera 歌仔戲, and at many temples in the city, there is a dedicated following to this performance genre that packs

the temple plaza.[39]

In the mid-afternoon, though, if the celebrations are for the temple's main god, then virtually all temples in the city and county will perform a Rewarding of the Troops 犒賞 (kaò shàng/ ƙuh shiõh)[40] rite for the Spirit Soldiers 神兵（shén bīng) of the Five Camps 五營 (wǔ yíng/ n̂g̃ou yiāȟ). For this rite, the Five Camps Heads 五營頭, and those of the 36 Official Generals where these too are enshrined on the left-hand altar-niche, are brought out to an altar-table set up for the rite in the outer temple courtyard, together with Sire Tiger 虎爺 (aka the Prime Marshal of the Lower Altar 下壇元帥), who is usually given his raw offerings on the ground. The entire ceremony is performed outside at this altar-table set up for the Five Camps, and is never conducted inside the temple itself.

If the temple has outer camps 外營 stationed around its precinct, then it is normal to process to and renew these camps as part of this ceremony, though sometimes this is performed separately. These rites for the spirit-soldiers of the Five Camps are, together with the Celebration of Longevity, fundamental practices necessary to the maintenance of the temple cult. Their performance is mandatory, and custom mandates that any temple which offers any kind of

[39] Less expensive and less prestigious opera troupes, however, or performances at smaller, remote temples often draw but tiny audiences, giving the handful of spectators an enormous value of free entertainment. The puppet theater known as "Cloth-bag puppetry" 布袋戲 (b̀ou đei heě), however, is nowadays only performed for the gods themselves, as with but few exceptions, lost its former audience due in part to the adoption of cassette or recorded performances and the abandonment of live music and recitation of the script. The marionette theater, by contrast 傀儡戲 (g̃a l̂ei heě) is relatively rare (performed at Jiào and Worship of the Lord of Heaven 拜天公), and is a formal ritual performance involving the summons of the puppeteer's Ancestral Master, Tiándū Yuánshuì 田都元帥. The more exciting and technically demanding marionette theater inevitably draws more of an audience than the Cloth-bag puppet theater, even though these still perform with great frequency, but with only the gods watching for more than a few moments.

[40] This same rite is also often called 賞兵 ŝhiõh binn̂g, lit. rewarding of the troops. The kào/kuȟ 犒 of ƙuh shiõh likewise specifically indicates a feast and rewards given to soldiers.

mediumistic communication, be it by Spirit-medium or spirit-writing,[41] must maintain these spirit-armies of the Five Camps, the idea being that this prevents harmful and predatory spirits from taking control of mediums or inhabiting the temple itself. Though in some cases, temples will simply present offerings to the Five Camps without a Ritual Master ceremony, this is universally regarded as inferior to a proper Rewarding of the Troops rite, and is only adopted as a stop-gap convenience in certain circumstances.

Though space in this study does not permit a detailed presentation of these and the other rites, I will briefly note that the Rewarding of the Troops is clearly modeled on, or generally influenced by mortuary ritual and the rite of Universal Salvation 普度, for, after all, the spirit-soldiers of the Five Camps are souls of the unworshipped dead who have been recruited from their status as orphan souls 孤魂 and given shelter and sustenance under the incense burner of a temple deity. Their ritual, however, embodies numerous conventions employed in mortuary and Pǔdù ceremony. For example, the offerings themselves are laid out and stuck with incense in exactly the same manner as a Pǔdù, while in the climactic Rewarding of the Troops itself, oblations of water are poured on the ground, the universal sign of making offerings to the dead. Moreover, the liturgy itself includes a "transformation of the food" 變食, exactly like the Pǔdù, wherein the food offerings are magically multiplied into vast amounts sufficient to feed the hosts of spirit-soldiers. In some cases, when it is inconvenient for the temple to perform its own Rewarding of the Troops, and the less-ideal "bài-bài" 拜拜 offering method is used instead, temples may hire a lay Buddhist who specializes in Pǔdù and other mortuary ritual to come and perform this transformation of the food.

[41] This convention does not pertain to the Sectarian and related altar-groups which specialize in spirit-writing, and are not part of the networked Common Religion in either their cultic structure or social participation.

Moreover, this rite is always performed in the afternoon and never in the morning, another convention linked to the worship of Yīn 陰 spirits (as the power of Yīn grows after the sun passes the meridian), such as the custom of Worshipping at the Gate 拜門腳口 performed on the 2nd and 16th of the lunar month by merchants, primarily, which amounts to propitiatory worship of orphan ghosts (under the supervision of the local Earth God) who "pass by the door." Even the custom of tossing items to a gathered crowd like in a Pǔdù is also a feature of the Rewarding of the Troops. And finally, certain altars, like the Ānpíng Miàoshòu Gōng will perform an act known as "scattering beans to become soldiers" 撒豆成兵, a practice possibly linked to funerary custom in which beans and other grains were scattered into the coffin of the deceased.[42] Though these parallels between the Rewarding of the Troops and the Pǔdù do not naturally come to the minds of Taiwanese when they perform or contemplate these rites, most understand that the spirit-soldiers are in fact orphan ghosts, while observation reveals these parallels to be clear and extensive.

Sometimes other rites are performed on the day of the god's birthday, such as Building a Bridge to Cross over Adversity 造橋過限, so that worshippers may come and receive the benefits and blessing of the protective exorcism enacted when they cross the bridge and receive bodily purification known as the Sacrifice to Remove [adversity] 祭解 (tzei gài). In Ānpíng, if the god has a Spirit-medium, then the temple will usually have their (or their temple precinct's) Minor Rite troupe perform the Presenting Cash to Supplement Fortune 進錢補運 (jin jeēń bou wuñ, aka. 獻金紙 ĥen ḡeem tzuà) rite on the evening of the god's birthday. This major ritual, which features the descent of the god into the underworld, is another iconic ceremony of Minor Rite tradition.

[42] See De Groot, *Religious System of China,* 1:89-90.

But if there is no (living) Spirit-medium for that particular god then the temple will perform the Rewarding of the Troops. Often, to accommodate these different rituals, the Rewarding of the Troops is shifted to a different day.

In the evening of the god's birthday, there is normally a feast, at the end of which there is a competition by tossing the divination-blocks to determine who will serve as the Master of the Incense Burner 爐主 as well as subsidiary positions usually called Head Households 頭家 (tau geî). In the festive competition that ensues, the individuals with the most consecutive "holy cups" 聖杯, or "yes" answers, are chosen, in theory by the god, to enjoy the blessing brought by hosting the god's incense burner, and usually a spirit-image on their domestic altar for the course of the year. Typically, the Master of the Incense Burner is expected to contribute to the temple in return for this privilege.

Thus the birthdays of the gods are ritual occasions which serve primarily to maintain the sanctity of the temple-cult by formally purifying the temple-space in the Purification of the Altar ceremony, and then specifically celebrating the god with first Minor Rite and then Daoist or other ritual, while finally rewarding the spirit-soldiers who guard the temple and assist the deity in the spiritual acts which protect and heal their devotees. Moreover, the gods' birthdays set temple precinct alliances into motion, and reaffirm these bonds through highly formal ritual and jovial fellowship, but in a way that is not taxing in either time or material resources.

Establishing and Reproducing Cultic Elements

In my research, I have come to see the rituals of the temple-world as primarily divisible into three overlapping areas, comprising rites which serve to: 1) establish and reproduce the cultic

elements of the gods; 2) maintain the sanctity and viability of these elements, and 3) enact ritual transformations and transfers on behalf of people as the primary ritual subjects. This tri-partite analysis differs from how other researchers have tended to view ritual, with most making a distinction between rites for the temple community as a whole on the one hand, and so-called "minor rites" 小法事 for individuals on the other. The problem with this more conventional scheme is that it obscures several important factors. First of all, rites performed for the temple community often include the very same individual-oriented rites that are supposedly in a different category, while rites for the temple itself are likewise frequently performed for domestic altars in people's homes and businesses. Hence this conventional view of ritual is not very helpful in actually grasping the purposes and functions of ritual as practiced. Moreover, it is essential to recognize the symbolic and cultic interdependence of individual-oriented rites of healing, protection, and fortune-boosting on the one hand, and those of the temple-cult on the other, as neither can exist without the other, a point which likewise has been largely overlooked in other studies of temple and healing ritual.

Table 5.3 Rites and Procedures of Reproducing or Establishing Cultic Elements

Animation of Spirit-images 開光, including its preliminaries of "Opening the [carving] Hatchet" 開斧, and "Entering the Spirit" 入神
Settling the Incense-burner 安爐
Primary Rites for the Consecration and Opening of a New Temple:
Thanksgiving to the Earth 謝土/ 慶土 (featuring the Sacrifice to the Killer-spirits 祭煞)
Entering the [Incense] Fire and Settling [the gods'] Seat 入火安座- aka Opening the Temple Doors 開廟門 and installing the spirit-images, incense-burners and other sacra in their places in the new temple.
Acquiring the Imperial Edict 領玉旨(for completely new temples or altars), performed at the Lord of Heaven Temple 天公廟
Rites for the Recruitment of Spirit-soldiers, variously called Summoning from Fire 請火 , Summoning from Water 請水, and Summoning Armies 招軍(also effected by Requesting Incense Fire from one's Ancestral Temple), or by the rite of Acquiring Soldiers 領兵, performed at the Lord of Heaven Temple 天公廟 (sometimes performed in tandem with Acquiring the Imperial Edict)

Training of Spirit-mediums, sometimes still involving formal periods of Sitting in Restriction 坐禁 and Emerging from Seclusion 出關 (etc.)

Also, the related, inverse procedures of:
Taking out the Incense-fire 出火 (removal of live cultic elements to a temporary altar 行臺/行館 before temple restoration)
Withdrawing the Spirit 退神 dismissing the deity's soul from a spirit-image (to cease cultic worship, or in some cases to restore the image)

Rites which Serve to Maintain the Temple (or altar) Cult

Purification of the Altar 清壇
Celebration of Longevity 祝壽 on the deity's birthday
Rewarding the Troops 犒賞
Settling the Camps 安營 , performed annually to renew outer camps
Purification by Burning Oil 煮油/焚油逐穢 -performed at the end of the lunar year, or before major Jiào, to purify the temple, the precinct, and its inhabitants
Pilgrimage to the Ancestral Temple 謁祖廟, including:
Passing over the Incense-burner 過爐 (also performed at other times), and Requesting [Incense] Fire 請火(usually understood to also renew the daughter-temple's Spirit-soldiers from the Ancestral Temple's reserves)
Scripture recitation 誦經, often fortnightly, or in conjunction with god's birthday
Continual daily incense and offerings

Person-oriented Rites which enact Ritual Transformations and Transfers:

Gathering-in Shock 收驚
Building a Bridge to Cross Over Adversity 造橋過限
Presenting Cash to Supplement Fortune 進錢補運
Sacrifice to the Stars 祭星
Sacrifice to the Killer-spirits 祭煞 (when performed as healing rite)
Sacrifice to Remove Adversity 祭解 –embedded in one of the above 4 rites
Entering the Flower Garden 入花園, aka Plucking Flowers to Change the Bushel 栽花換斗
Smiting the Citadel (of the Unjustly Killed) 打城
Ceremony of the Dipper 禮斗
Rites of the Children's Gates 兒童關煞
Cutting-off the Peach-Blossom 斬桃花
Settling the Fetus 安胎 (now rare, primarily limited to talismans)
Smashing the Stream Shrimp 打流霞（蝦）(rite to avert miscarriage, now rare)

Red-Headed Mortuary rites of the Táinán-area Língbǎo Priests:

Smiting the Citadel (of the Unjustly Killed) 打城
Smiting the Water Wheel 打水 車狀
Smiting the Blood-Wheel 打血狀
Smiting the Vehicle-gate 打車關
Mountain of the Hanging Guest 吊客山

Since I cannot present an analysis of these rituals here, let me mention that of these three categories I have outlined, in terms of establishing or reproducing cultic elements, the most paradigmatic is the animation of spirit-images 開光, by which an inanimate block of wood, as well as painted door-gods, wall-murals, command-flags, performance-troupe masks, papier-mâche images of many kinds, sacrificial Royal Boats, ritual implements (such as the ritual whip) and many other elements of the temple cult are sequentially brought into the order of the sacred, and imbued with spiritual life. This is accomplished in such a way as to impregnate the image with the most tangible or sensible elements of life and sentience: blood (from a rooster's comb), light (from the sun, often symbolic), heat and fire (from burning talisman-papers), movement (by vigorously rocking the spirit-image at the moment of its "birth"), and in many cases breath, (by having members of the

altar-community breathe on the brushes used to dot the eyes and vital points of the image).

Moreover, this rite is shown to be fundamentally Red-Headed, even when performed by Daoist priests, as the formula they use to consecrate the rooster and brushes contain the formula "May the Ancestral Master on My Behalf...May the Root Master on My behalf..." 祖師為吾來... 本師為吾來..., a variable ritual formula frequently and exclusively found in Tantric-Popular Ritual Method ceremony, in which all manner of ritual verbs are added to this template. Moreover, the horn used by Daoist priests is also representative of the Tantric-Popular Ritual Master Tradition, a fact made explicit by how the horn always has a strip of red cloth tied to it; the horn itself is Red-Headed. Moreover, there is a live chicken involved, and in all such cases where barnyard animals or household items like brooms, straw mats, or salt-and-rice and the like are used, such ritual implements denote a Popular realm of ritual alien to the courtly ceremony of the Daoist priest. Moreover, the classical Daoist priest is not primarily a ritual expert of the deified human beings and environmental spirits enshrined in temples. Such is the domain of the Ritual Master, including his Daoist counterpart of the Ritual Officer. It is important to emphasize that the Minor Rite or Ritual Master tradition is not merely some supplementary source of ritual services provided on the side, as it were, of temple religion. The Ritual Master is first and foremost the ritual expert responsible for controlling and supervising the spirits enshrined in the temple, a historic condition reflected in the incorporation of Ritual Master symbols and ceremonies into the structure of the temple-cult itself.

Outlines and Branches of the Minor Rite: Tradition-groups and transmission-branches in Pénghú and Táinán

Table 5.4 Tradition-groups and their constituent transmission-branches:
The Pénghú tradition-group
Pǔ-Ān 普庵 and Lǘshān 閭山 lineage-groups (pài 派)
The Ānpíng and Táinán City "Black-head" 黑頭 (hēi tóu/ōu taú) tradition-group
Lǐ Fēng 李風/Kāi Shān Wáng Miào 開山王廟 transmission-branch
Ānpíng transmission-branch
Lián Jíchéng 連吉成 transmission-branch
Jīn-ān Gōng 金安宮 transmission-branch
The Táinán-area "Red Head" 紅頭 (hóng tóu/āng taú) "Xú-jiǎ" 徐甲 tradition-group
Nánchǎng Bǎo-ān Gōng 南廠保安宮 transmission-group (system)
Red-Headed rites of Táinán-area Língbǎo Daoist Priests
The Táinán County "Three Altars Ritual Master"三壇法師 (sam duāh ǐuat sû) tradition-group/cluster (Marked by individual variety, but in many cases related to and developed from the Red-Headed Xú-jiǎ tradition-group)
Hierarchies of shared tradition and historical transmission:
Tradition-group
Transmission-branch
Ritual Altar 法壇, altar-lineage

In its specific manifestations and historical transmission, there are several major branches or tradition-groups of the Ritual Master tradition in Pénghú and Táinán, with noticeably different branches in northern Táiwān and the southern Gāo-Píng 高屏 regions, as well as in Jīnmén and beyond. The most basic invocations and symbols of these different groups are still largely the same –from the palate of Ancestral Masters and Ritual Method spirits to the cult of the Five Camps, the fundamental fabric of the Ritual Master tradition and its core cluster of shared invocations remains remarkably consistent among these different lines of transmission.[43] These stylistically distinctive and coherent tradition-groups are expressed through clusters of historic transmission-branches

[43] See chapter 3 for identification of the core shared invocations of the regional tradition.

that manifest in reality only as specific altars and their own altar-lineages; except for the Nánchǎng Bǎo-ān Gōng 南廠保安宮(or Ōng Ginn̂g) association of "ha̍p (assist) character-generations"協字輩 (which hardly includes every altar performing the Ōng-Ginn̂g system), there is no association or organization beyond temple precinct-alliances in which different Ritual Altars 法壇 –even of the same lineage– convene or cooperate. Thus at the level of concrete social reality, there are only specific altar-lineages, and yet Ritual Altar lineages exist in cohesive clusters of both the historic transmission-branches, and within the larger "trunks" or tradition-groups which circumscribe transmission-branches within stylistic and structural conventions.

In urban centers like Táinán, and presumably other historic county and prefectural cities in Fújiàn, multiple tradition-groups exist(ed) side by side in the same communities. Hence these specific styles or expressions of the Ritual Master tradition may be locally specific, but not locally exclusive. Using a metaphor of branches to envision and analyze the Minor Rite in these (and perhaps most) locations is only accurate when we imagine these as the branches, trunks, and roots of a banyan tree, in which branches rise from many roots and parallel trunks, with subdividing branches that both diverge and sometimes rejoin. This banyan tree image of the Ritual Master tradition better reflects the actual situation than the kind of simplistic diagram that Liú Zhìwàn (1974) produced, which depicts five or so neatly divided sub-traditions defined by which (singular) Ancestral Master they worship, and further linked to a speculative place of origin. The situation in Táinán and Pénghú does not support this taxonomy of the tradition simply based on which Ancestral Master they nominally regard, and what pài 派 label a given altar may or may not subscribe to.

Within and across all levels of what I call tradition-groups and their concrete, historical expression within transmission-branches, different altars make varying claims of affiliation to Lŭshān 閭山, Pŭ-Ān 普庵 and other Ancestral Masters 祖師 and the lineage-groups 派 (pài) that such affiliation implies. For example, in the Jīn-ān Gōng 金安宮 transmission-branch , the Jīn-ān Gōng itself takes Pŭ-Ān as their Ancestral Master, and recent Taiwanese authors have consigned them to a Pŭ-Ān pài 派(=lineage-group), but disciples of their older Ritual Master have altars which worship Xŭ Xùn 許遜 or a Lŭshān Ancestral Master 閭山祖師 as their patron saint, and are thus deemed Lŭshān pài, but in fact aside from variables of which invocations come first (or are omitted), their performance traditions are essentially identical and descend from the same historic transmission.[44] Indeed many altars in and around Táinán claim no specific lineage-group affiliation whatsoever. Within the Black-Head Lĭ Fēng 李風 transmission-branch[45], there are altars which worship Ancestral Master Clearwater 清水祖師, Zhāng Făzhŭ Gōng 張法主公, and Xuántiān Shàngdì 玄天上帝 as Ancestral Masters, and most altars of this transmission-branch claim no pài or lineage-group label at all.

Likewise the Pŭ-Ān lineage-group of Pénghú, and the the Pŭ-Ān lineage-groups (be it pài 派 or jiào 教) of Táinán are only similar in the symbol of Ancestral Master Pŭ-Ān; beyond possession of the same broad set of similar invocations common to Pénghú, central and southern Táiwān as a whole, in terms of performance, style, and specific ritual sequences, the two are so different that the Táinán traditions cannot be explained as derivatives of the Pénghú Minor Rite.

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[44] See Wáng Zhāowén 王釗雯, 《臺南市廟宮小法團之研究》, 108-111.

[45] The extent to which variations have proliferated among different altar-lineages of this line of descent that the term "transmission-branch" is more accurate than "transmission-branch," which suggests a greater degree of conformity along a linear transmission than is the case here.

Instead the supposedly different Lűshān and Pǔ-Ān lineage groups of Pénghú are very similar, and in the same way the Pénghú Lűshān "pài" is, in the form and details of its performance quite unlike altars that claim Lűshān pài affiliation in Táinán. Beyond this it is important to note that in every Táinán performance of the Invitation of the Spirits, every altar invokes numerous Ancestral Masters, including Pǔ-Ān and Madame Línshuǐ 臨水夫人 among others. Simplistic taxonomies of the Minor Rite tradition like the one canonized by Liú Zhìwàn and repeated by later authors, which propose or assume coherence among pài lineage-groups of the same name, and which are based on a singular Ancestral Master, such assumptions about pài or lineage-group labels simply do not match reality. Nor should we conclude, as some writers do, that these eclectic tendencies arose purely from an intermixing brought on by immigration to Táiwān. The cities and towns of the Mínnán littoral and their hinterlands have been intensively interconnected through regional (and international) trade and internal migration since the Southern Sòng if not earlier.[46]

The more important contours of the tradition cannot be traced to the so-called pài 派 or lineage-groups, whose distinctions within a given tradition-group only manifest in the variable of the Ancestral Master and in minor stylistic markers. In other words, pài 派, or what I consistently render as lineage-group, is only meaningful within the specific contexts of these larger branches that I call tradition-groups, and may not be very meaningful at all. When separated from their specific tradition-groups, the various pài labels such as Sān-naǐ Pài 三奶派, Pǔ-Ān Pài 普庵派 and Lűshān Pài 閭山派 are not independently meaningful categories. No meaningful generality beyond the name of the ostensible Ancestral Master can be transferred from say the Pǔ-Ān Pài of

[46] On Sòng-era local trade neworks in Southern Fújiàn see Hugh Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks: Southern Fujian Province from the Third to the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Táinán and then to that of Pénghú. The same holds true for the other pài labels (again, only the Xǔjiǎ 徐甲 tradition-group and its kin exhibit strong affinity within a "pài" or lineage-group label). Rather, the specific form and content of Ritual Master altars conform to these larger familial branches that I call tradition-groups for lack of an unambiguous indigenous equivalent for these primary historical clusters of transmission as a category.[47]

These cohesive and readily apparent tradition-groups are, as categories, abstractions expressed in practice through one or more historical transmission-branches. The specific genealogies of Táinán's four main transmission-branches have been established by Wáng Zhāo-wén 王釗雯(2007), who was able to trace each lineage back to specific late Qīng and Japanese-era Ritual Masters, who stand as apical ancestors to their respective lineages.[48] Within most of these transmission-branches, different altars now often display distinctive features, innovations and variations in such details as nuances of melody and other elements of performance, adaptations

[47] Usually at this level of organization, people speak of "Pénghú Ritual [method]" 澎湖法, (or Minor Rite 小法/法仔 ǐuat-à) , "Black-Head Minor Rite" 黑頭小法, and Red-Head Minor Rite 紅頭小法, though the latter if derived from the Bǎo-ān Gōng lineage is synonymous with the Xú-jiǎ pài. The need for a clearer system of taxonomy becomes readily apparent when consulting Taiwanese research, in which the same term "ritual lineage" 法脈 (fǎ mài) is used to depict categorically-different dimensions of historic transmission. For example Dài et. al. (2014:56-76) apply the term "ritual lineage" to both what I have labeled "transmission-branches" and more narrow lines of transmission within these, such as the "Héshèng Táng/Pǔjì Dìan ritual lineage" 和勝堂-普濟殿法脈, which is one specific part (two altar-lineages that sprang from the same origin in the Héshèng Táng) of what they then call the "Kāishān Wang Miào ritual lineage" 開山王廟法脈. These two different dimensions of historical transmission are not the same, and for clarity's sake require disambiguation, hence my novel nomenclature for different levels of abstraction and specificity within concrete bounds of historic practice and transmission.

[48] Beyond this, previous researchers have been unable to demonstrate the origins of these different forms of the Minor Rite in Táinán; sometimes people assume all such Minor Rite traditions were transmitted from Pénghú to the Táinán area (e.g., Wú Yǒngméng, 《2009 法教與民俗信仰學術研討會論文集》, 32), where it somehow evolved into a completely different Prefectural City style. But this theory of a Pénghú origin for the Táinán Minor Rite is on its face is simply implausible, as the differences between the Pénghú and Táinán tradition-groups are too great. As I demonstrate elsewhere in this study, numerous pieces of evidence, from the testimony of de Groot and Kenneth Dean, to video material from Xiàmén, to symbols in the Minor Rite texts, it is now clear that the Táinán-area Black-Head tradition-group originated in the Tóng-ān/Xiàmén region, while others have yet to be definitively linked to specific areas.

which distinguish them from other altars in the same transmission-branch , and which may be further reproduced as a Ritual Master's pupils go on to establish new altars. Hence certain transmission-branches (the Lǐ Fēng 李風 aka Kāishān Wáng Miào 開山王廟 lineage in particular) have come to exhibit greater internal variety among altars, while others have, in the details of their melodies, gestures, and style maintained closer degrees of conformity.

Thus by examining their histories and elements of ritual performance, these relations of cultural reproduction form a general hierarchy which I will characterize from largest and most inclusive to the most specific and particular as: tradition-group, transmission-branch, and altar tradition. Though there are informal patterns of collaboration among certain altars of the same transmission-branch, and occasionally across them, there is no concrete institution or organization beyond each specific ritual altar 法壇 and their altar tradition.[49] However, from both analytic and historical standpoints, specific altar-traditions can be shown to exist within just such a cultural hierarchy of ritual forms and historic lineages.

On the variations, styles, and emphases of the Minor Rite

There are a number of variables, or axes of variation along which both specific altar-traditions and general tradition-groups manifest. The first major variable is whether the Ritual Master performs alone with but one or two accompanists, or as part of a troupe. In Táinán City, only the Xújiǎ 徐甲/Bǎo-Ān Gōng 保安宮 system is, in practice, adopted to both the accompanied Ritual Master and the Minor Rite troupe arrangements. Ritual Masters of the Táinán County

[49] For example, between the Nánchǎng Bǎo-ān Gōng 南廠保安宮 and the Nánchǎng Lǘshān Táng 南廠閭山堂.

"Three Altars" tradition-group[50] exclusively perform alone with usually only one accompanist. Some rural priests will perform as a one-man band, singing invocations while beating a drum from which a small gong is suspended. I have never seen a Táinán-area Black-Head Ritual Master perform as a single Central Reverend with accompanist, though the Héyì Táng's development of a "backstage" 後場 style accompaniment makes this possible.[51] But unlike the rural and professional

[50] For the time being I must refer to these Ritual Masters as a fairly indistinct group, as their sheer variety, plus the nature of their performance (usually memorized, no text on site, incantations softly chanted rather than sung loudly, etc.) makes specific sorting-out of all these specific performance-traditions tricky. The major survey of Táinán-area Ritual Masters by Dài et. al , 《臺南傳統法派及其儀式》, fails to give any concrete information about ritual content and structure whatsoever, and only in one short passage refers to the ritual of these rural Ritual Masters as a general category, and employs extremely general terms that do more than confirm this rural ritual repertoire to be an iteration of the prevailing Táinán Minor Rite, which we may infer by the invocations of the United Altar and Prime Marshal Ōng Suǹ 王孫元帥. We are given no further detailed information regarding ritual structure, such as how altars are opened, or how ritual is precisely commenced. Hence despite a book-length study of dozens of rural Ritual Master altars, we cannot yet analyze the ritual form and content in Táinán's rural townships. If there is greater standardization beneath the outer appearances of stylistic variation then this too would be important to determine through more precise observation. These most useful data in the book is found in the tables concerning Ancestral Master or pài information, as this largely demonstrates how one may not, in fact, draw meaningful conclusions from these factors alone, but must instead examine the concrete details of ritual content and structure to determine where a given altar-tradition stands in relation to those of Táinán City and elsewhere.

[51] The typical Ritual Master accompanist plays a round (rather than octagonal) "ritual drum" 法鼓 with a long handle, usually by sitting astride the handle, from which a small gong is often attached, or otherwise suspended, as these two percussion instruments –drum and gong, are indispensible to all Ritual Master traditions that I am aware of. The "backstage" 後場 hòu chǎng (ǎu diōl̂) set up used by Daoist Priests, primarily, and certain Minor Rite altars is different, and usually requires at least two people: one to play a larger, mounted drum, and then another who strikes a slightly larger gong with one hand, and with the other usually taps a small hand cymbal on the bench. Wooden "drum-boards" 鼓板 gǔ bǎn and occasionally wooden clappers 拍板 pái bǎn also appear from time to time in the backstage percussion section –none of which are seen in the single accompanied Ritual Master's ensemble. Though the backstage set-up is universal to Daoist altars, only certain Minor Rite altars use them. In Táinán City and County, aside from the Héyì Táng's occasional use, to my knowledge, only the unique Xī Lóng Diàn 西龍殿 altar in Ānpíng uses a backstage style accompaniment, and their altar-tradition is, in the Táinán area, an isolate. Further afield, however, one finds Daoist style backstage percussion in the Gāo-Píng region and in Jīnmén, sometimes accompanied by suǒ-nà 嗩吶 clarinets as well. In the Táinán area, the musical accompaniments respective to the Minor Rite and Língbǎo altars are quite segregated; in other areas, even where sharp ritual differences distinguish the Red Head Ritual Master

Red Headed priests, all Black-Head altars –in the City and in Ānpíng are temple-based troupe-style performance traditions, as are those in Pénghú.

There is a different style of independent Red-Head Ritual Masters in the Gāo-Píng 高屏 region –roughly coterminous with the same distribution of Gāo-Píng style Daoist ritual– in which the Ritual Master performs with a small backstage accompaniment of one drummer and one or two other percussionists. This broad Gāo-Píng tradition is more vigorous and movement-oriented than the Táinán Minor Rite, which by comparison emphasizes singing invocations, together with a restrained and magisterial priestly style. Initial observation suggests altars representative of this Gāo-píng area, by using the seated backstage accompaniment are able to allow the Ritual Master to focus more on movement and ritual gestures. This greater emphasis on movement means that unlike in Táinán, Ritual Masters of this broad Gāo-Píng cluster perform a great many pacing techniques, together with mudras, all of which are performed in integrated gestures, charged with talisman-water and breath. Several informants from Píngdōng have told me that they regard the traditions in the Héngchūn 恆春 Peninsula as the most remarkable in the region. The exact nature and distribution of traditions in this Gāo-Píng region, their differences and relationships, all require further study, though we may confirm here that the Ritual Master enjoys the same niche in the ritual ecosystem as seen in Táinán and Pénghú, often performing in conjunction with Daoist priests as the specialist in charge of rites of exorcistic purification, both for communities and removing Killer-spirits from new temples, while also dealing with Spirit-mediums and the Spirit-soldiers. Across these tradition-groups in central and southern Táiwān, the basic cultural arrangement among ritual experts is rather consistent, and reflects the historic Sòng-era arrangement among Ritual Officers 法官, Spirit-mediums, and Daoist priests.

Ritual Standardization and Differentiation: patterns in transmission and practice among Daoist priests and the Minor Rite

The tendency for Minor Rite altars to develop idiosyncrasies that distinguish their performance from that of other altars in the community is a highly visible factor at work the Minor Rite tradition. As such this centripetal tendency toward variation also stands in contrast with the more highly standardized tradition of the Daoist priests in the Táinán region. In light of these divergent trends, certain patterns emerge when we compare the organization of Minor Rite altars with the performative contexts influencing the Língbǎo Daoist priests.

At the most practical and immediate level, Daoist priests perform as a troupe in which members must frequently collaborate and perform with different High Priests 高功, and usually several High Priests will perform together during a larger Jiào. Though all Daoist altars feature a core set of performers who almost exclusively work together, to make a living most priests (and troupe musicians) must continually work with different altars and different High Priests. Likewise every High Priest must work with other priests trained under different family altars. Thus for such prosaic reasons as scheduling, as well as the varying scale of rites and corresponding personnel requirements, there must be a labor-pool of priests who can all perform what must be, because of this personnel dynamic, and the technical complexity of the ritual program, a relatively standardized ritual tradition. The intricacies of melody, movement and timing in Daoist ritual are so manifold and exacting that within specific ritual sequences there cannot be too great a variance

of performance among the Daoist altars who share the same labor pool.[52] Hence the basic economies of ritual performance and the ritual marketplace necessitate collaboration, and such collaboration in turn tends to both require and reinforce ritual standardization.

The performative and personnel contexts of the Minor Rite are by contrast quite different. First, as Schipper emphasized, Minor Rite altars are mostly based in temples of the Common Religion, though independent Ritual Masters also maintain their own home altars similar in some ways to those of Daoist priests.[53] As self-contained performance groups attached to a temple which can usually supply a pool of participants, the Minor Rite troupe has far fewer performance or personnel related reasons for collaboration among members of different troupes.

Thus where Schipper emphasized the organizational differences between Daoist priests and Ritual Masters, he specifically indicated such institutions as the Lǎo Jūn Huì 老君會 (Lǎo Jūn Association) as a factor binding Daoist priests into a more organized profession. But it is instructive to note that the Daoist priesthood is at its most organized and unified on the occasion of ordination rites, where varying configurations of altars, priests, and (now) often one of three rival

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[52] As Daoist ritual performance hinges on the continuous execution of carefully timed movements and musical shifts and so on, the specific liturgical program must be somewhat standardized within the spatial/geographic area of the shared labor-pool. If there were the same degrees of difference among Língbǎo Daoist altar's performances as there are in Minor Rite altars, even of the same transmission-branchor cluster, then

[53] Let me note here that the specific traditions practiced by most professional, independent Ritual Masters in Táinán City proper are all practitioners of what I would argue constitute "lineage-systems," which is to say a more strongly unified or standardized performance tradition. In this way, independent Ritual Masters like Lín Dòuzhī 林斗枝 can either perform like the Three Altars 三壇 Masters of the County, with a single drummer-accompanist, or in a troupe composed of members who can perform the same (Bǎo Ān Gōng) ritual system. Likewise practitioners of the Héyì Táng lineage are both most likely to be professional troupes, but to have members rotate through various altars. Hence professionalization in general creates a labor-driven incentive to ritual standardization, whereas temple-centered Minor Rite troupes tend to function more within the scope of their temple community and its alliance network; as more of a self-contained unit temple membership or participation directly determines the availability of personnel to maintain a temple's Minor Rite troupe. Likewise, decline in available members has caused many temple-based Minor Rite troupes, especially of certain Black-Head transmission-branches, to end without further practice or transmission.

Celestial Masters all gather to confer ordination and social recognition upon a new High Priest. The particular constellation of priests assembled in this way, though, is variable and reflects the specific background and connections of the priest to be ordained, and is not simply the convening of a standing institutional organ. Thus when the Daoist ecclesia comes together to celebrate the continuance of their priesthood, this is achieved through webs of personal connections rather than the intermediacy of a set institution.

Hence it is not formal, institutional organization per se which serves to standardize local and regional spheres of Daoist ritual, rather it is first the tradition's textual basis, and then the economics of a shared ritual marketplace, coupled with the technical requirements of ritual performance which bind Daoist priests together and promote ritual standardization. But in these ways the dynamics surrounding Língbǎo Daoist ritual are quite different from those affecting temple-based Minor Rite altars.[54]

While the fee-driven economy of the ritual marketplace stimulates collaboration and standardization among Daoist altars in the Táinán region, then the same general economic forces have inclined temples to establish their own Minor Rite altars in part to specifically avoid having to hire outside ritual experts. Likewise, professional Minor Rite troupes are, like temple-based troupes, self-contained membership-groups. The professional Ritual Masters of (mainly) rural areas tend to work in the most independent setting of all, with only one accompanist to split the ritual fees. Thus where Daoist priests work in an environment of interdependence –between their

[54] To this we might add the process of ordination, which like other ritual processes requires the collaboration of several priests.

family altar, local temples, musicians, and other Daoist Priests– Ritual Masters and Minor Rite troupes are organized as self-contained units and tend toward independence.

With temple-based troupes, which form the overwhelming majority of altars in the urban areas of Táinán and Ānpíng, perhaps three quarters or more of their ritual performances are rites for their own home-temple, with the remainder given to performing rites in temple members' homes and workplaces, as well as in other temples of their precinct alliance networks. In most cases fees are not given or accepted for the performance of rites within the temple's immediate and extended community. Hence the specific contours of temple organization impose a form on the Minor Rite troupe and encourage its self-contained, volunteer-based nature. Since a temple generally attracts a community of participants it is thus able to sustain a pool of potential troupe members. In fact, if a temple can no longer field an adequate number of new Minor Rite troupe members, rather than seek to collaborate with other practitioners trained elsewhere, that particular troupe will cease performance and likely "end its transmission" 失傳 (śhit tuań), and the temple, now without its own troupe, must either rely on a troupe from a temple in their alliance network (which usually does not involve a cash fee), or hire a professional or semi-professional troupe to conduct the rites that are necessary to maintain the temple cult.

Thus with each Minor Rite altar rooted in a particular temple, and relieved of the need to keep their traditions commensurate with a wider pool of participants, altars of the same transmission-branch have over time developed numerous distinctive nuances that add up to noticeable differences. At a practical level these differences of style and detail mandate that if someone trained in one altar-tradition wanted to cross over to another altar, in most cases within the Black-Head tradition-group they would have to become accustomed to the other altar's way of

doing things before they could seamlessly participate. If someone has learned one altar tradition well, then they can in a short time pick up another altar's style, as this mostly requires familiarization with different nuances of melody, the varying placement of the meaningless metric syllables which figure so prominently in recital, as well as particular subtleties of drum beats, the addition of movements like bowing at the end of certain invocations, and so on. In my experience, though, only a tiny handful of Minor Rite enthusiasts switch-hit among different tradition-group and transmission-branches.

Interestingly, at the other extreme from temple-based troupes we find that two of the most noteworthy professional troupes in Táinán, the Héyì Táng 和意堂 Black-Head altar (flagship altar of the Lían Jíchéng 連吉成 transmission-branch) and the Shǒuzhēn Ritual Altar 守真法壇 of the Bǎo-ān Gōng Red-Head tradition-group will often take the otherwise unheardof measure of using both Red-Head and Black-Head melodies in a given performance, which in Táinán makes for a strikingly novel display of virtuosity. Normally no temple-based troupes would adopt the melody of another tradition-group, as indeed the melodies are among the primary distinctions identifying and distinguishing them.[55] Thus by mixing Red-Head and Black-Head melodies, these professional troupes in essence are further distinguishing themselves as operating on a higher level compared to most temple-based troupes.[56]

This specific tendency toward independence finds its most complete expression in the Three Altars Ritual Masters 三壇法師 of rural Táinán County, where to maintain profitability

[55] In fact people will speak very generally of "Black-Head melody" 黑頭調 or "Red-Head melody" 紅頭調, but in fact both of these traditions have multiple, distinctive melodies.
[56] The Héyì Táng, in singing melodies of the Red-Head tradition-group are expressing a direct influence arising from their sheer proximity to the Bǎo-ān Gōng some two-hundred meters away, and such usage dates at least to the older (now deified) Master

such Ritual Masters typically perform alone with only one accompanist. Though systematic analysis of their ritual structure and content has yet to be undertaken,[57] it appears that the complete independence of the single Ritual Master and single accompanist has fostered higher degrees of variety and ritual idiosyncrasy than seen in urban Minor Rite troupes. Hence we may hypothesize that in responding to the ritual marketplace and the nature of temple network organization, Minor Rite troupes and professional Ritual Masters take shape as independent units, and this independence in turn tends to encourage the development of individual variations in ritual performance, the very opposite of ritual standardization.

But where the situation inclines temple troupes to collaborate, then we see the emergence of ritual interchangeability and greater standardization. For example, in Ānpíng, the genealogies of altar lineages worked out by Qiū Zhì-jiā 邱致嘉 trace lineages according to community-precinct temples 社, while also confirming that in practice there are two systems encompassing two and three community precincts respectively, and within these systems Ritual Masters and troupe members routinely collaborate across community-precinct boundaries.[58]

Hence the patterns of practice and transmission found in Minor Rite and Língbǎo Daoist altars respond to the ritual marketplace by moving in opposite directions, with the Daoist priests relying upon collaboration and ritual standardization, and practitioners of the Minor Rite forming

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[57] Dài et. al., 《臺南傳統法派及其儀式》, which presents biographic glosses for many Ritual Masters in Táinán County did not offer specific information regarding ritual practice.

[58] See Qiū Zhìjià 邱致嘉, 《安平宮廟小法團之研究——以海頭社法脈為例》(碩士論文:國立臺南大學，民101 [2012]), and his section on Ānpíng in Dài et. al., 《臺南傳統法派及其儀式》, 89-103. In the latter source, the authors refer to these two "systems" as 法脈 fǎ mài or "ritual lineage," a perfectly logical usage with no better alternative. Elsewhere though the same authors use the same term to denote the historic transmission-branches in Táinán as well as their distinctive sub-lineages. Hence I have introduced the term system to describe a particular lineage in which two or more altars can and do collaborate in the practice of an essentially identical tradition.

independent troupes tending toward ritual idiosyncrasy. Both approaches reflect the fundamental reality of the religious system, as the "Daoist liturgical superstructure" rests upon a broad foundation of temple cults and their alliance networks which ultimately sponsor the ritual performances at the apex of the religion. In turn the specific organizational patterns of local temples on the one hand, and of Daoist ritual on the other directly influence ritual performance in divergent ways.[59]

A Brief Overview of Minor Rite Tradition-groups, from Pénghú to Táinán

The Pénghú Minor Rite

There is a distinctive Pénghú tradition-group, common to all of the many Minor Rite altars in the islands of Pénghú (the Pescadores), and which is markedly different from the Minor Rite on Táiwān, except where in has been directly transmitted from Pénghú, with several temples in Gāoxíong and Táinán, and what appear to be somewhat localized Pénghú traditions in Lùgǎng 鹿港.[60] Most altars of the Pénghú tradition claim affiliation with either a Lűshān or Pǔ-ān lineage-group, and this dyadic difference manifests primarily in a series of stylistic oppositions: for example, unique to the Pénghú tradition is the use of a single large drum; Lűshān lineages place theirs to the right of the altar, Pǔ-ān on the left. In Pénghú, with only one large drum, aside from a small

[59] Perhaps it goes without saying that the other major dimension at play here is of course the investment of time required to become a Daoist priest, much less that of a High Priest, which represents an enormous amount of investment capital, and which is reflected in the high fees which Daoist priests charge their clients. The difference in capital investment, as it were, between the reproduction of the Grand Língbǎo Rite and the Minor Rite is of course one of the most fundamental and enduring differences which distinguish and empower both of these two traditions, for while the more costly Língbǎo priesthood indisputably commands greater prestige, the price-tag attached to this prestige lends tremendous incentive to temples to seek the Minor Rite alternative where custom admits the possibility.

[60] There are a number of altars brought from Pénghú in Gāoxióng and parts of Píngdōng, but it appears that Pénghú-style Minor Rite has been slightly more localized in Lùgǎng.

gong, the other the four, six or more troupe members bang long wooden clappers, which are of even length in Pŭ-ān altars, while one is slightly shorter in those of the Lŭshān lineage-group, and so on.

The Pénghú tradition is arguably the most striking and dynamic in the regions examined here, featuring close interaction with Spirit-mediums, an emphasis on mudras, and in some places a predominance of youths and even small children as troupe members performing under older masters. Pénghú custom mandates that the Rewarding of the Troops be performed on the first and fifteenth of every lunar month, constituting a major ritual cycle in temple communities, while weekly Spirit-medium séances common to temples everywhere are in Pénghú essentially synonymous with their Invitation of the Spirits liturgy, as in Pénghú spirit-possession is inseparable from Minor Rite ceremony. With the possessed medium often donning the same headgear as the Ritual Master's, the Spirit-medium, in appearance and performance is more immediately a part of the Minor Rite troupe than is the case in Táinán.

The Pénghú tradition-group is rather musically distinctive, featuring a range of unique melodies 調 (diào/diaū) that are, for the most part, different from those on Táiwān. Given the complexities and local variations of Minor Rite altar-systems, systematic presentation of the Pénghú tradition requires not just a separate study but in fact a dedicated sub-field. I can here only offer some general remarks by way of introduction based primarily on several months spent observing a Pénghú altar, established via transmission and division-of-incense, in Táinán County.[61] A number of Taiwanese secondary works on the Pénghú Minor Rite make available certain details of ritual, but there is much here to be done regarding the relationships among ritual performers

[61] The Chìfàntáo Gōng 赤樊桃宮 in the Ānnán District.

and temples in Pénghú, as well as many broader questions of historical relationships to other traditions in the Mínnán littoral and beyond.

The Ānpíng and Táinán City "Black-Head" 黑頭 (hēi tóu/ōu taú) Tradition-group

Though noticeably different in certain details, traditions in Ānpíng and those in the Prefectural City 府城 usually called "Black-head" 黑頭 (ōu taú) constitute a remarkably consistent cluster of related traditions that all conform to similar stylistic and structural elements. This larger, Táinán-area Black-Head tradition-group manifests as four different transmission-branches: there are three distinct Black-Head transmission-branches in the Prefectural City, which Wáng Zhāo-wén named for their temple of origin or earliest recorded masters, all of whom were active during the late Qīng and Japanese periods.

Of these, only the Pǔ-ān 普庵/Seventh Ancestor 七祖 transmission-branch descending from Lían Jíchéng 連吉成 claims consistent Ancestral Master affiliation, not just in these two deities, but also in Lían Jíchéng's deified disciple Wáng Yán-shān 王炎山（1918-1988) Ritual Master of the Héyì Táng, whose sons and other disciples worship and invoke him as their deified Master 師父（sāi hû), the Golden Zen Ancestral Master 金禪祖師(Jīn Chán Zǔ Shī).

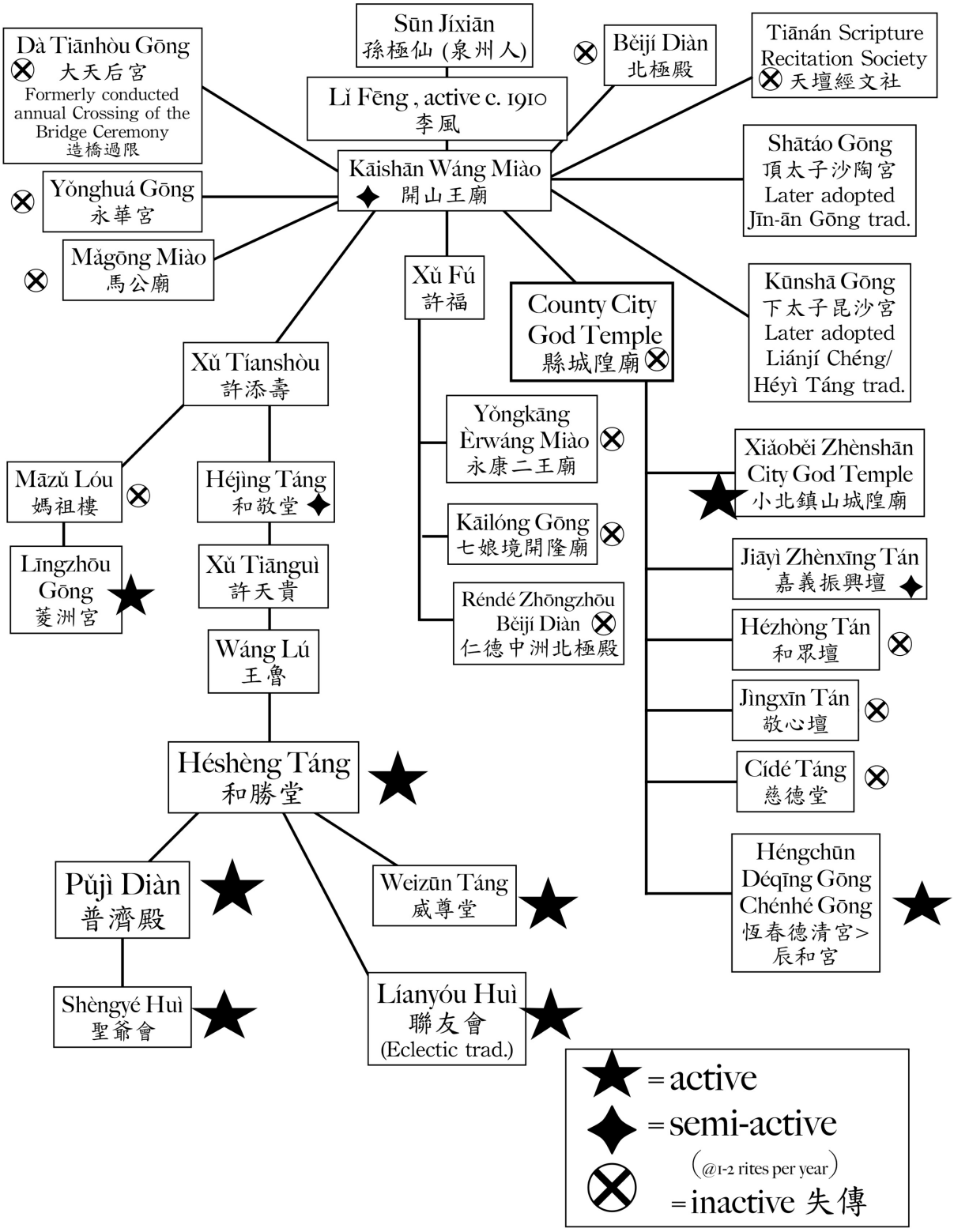
Then there is a Māzǔ temple in the former port district, the Jīn-ān Gōng 金安宮, that also witnessed the proliferation of their particular Black-Head tradition into a number of altars during the Japanese and Republican eras. During this same late Qīng/Japanese era, a Ritual Master named Lǐ Fēng 李風 transmitted yet another tradition based from the Kāishān Wáng 開山王廟 temple, dedicated to the deified Zhèng Chénggōng 鄭成功 the Holy King who Opened Tái[wān] 開台聖王. While altars of the Jīn-ān Gōng system variously invoke Pǔ-ān, Lűshān, and other

Ancestral Masters, some altars make no particular lineage-group or pài affiliation at all. None of the Lǐ Fēng/Kāishān Wáng transmission-branchaltars claim any traditional "pài" or lineage-group label, and different altars variously regard a range of deities, from Qīngshǔi Zǔshī 清水祖師 to Zhāng Fǎzhǔ Gōng 張法主公 and Xuántiān Shàngdì 玄天上帝 as Ancestral Masters, but amid this variety most altars still invoke Qīngshuǐ Zǔshī second, after the United Altar, and then the deified Zhèng Chéng-gōng, the "Holy King who Opened Tái[wān] 開臺聖王 as a marker of lineage descent from the Kāishān Wáng temple.

By all accounts these Black-Head traditions were established in Ānpíng and Táinán City before the advent of the Red-Head Xǔ-Jiǎ 徐甲 tradition-group that sprang from the Bǎo-ān Gōng 保安宮 during the later Japanese period, as sources record that by the late Qīng, Black-Head Minor Rite troupes were performing ceremonies for temple cults in the Prefectural City and Ānpíng.[62] These different transmission-branches all share not just the fundamentals of ritual structure and troupe disposition, most invocations are virtually the same, most tellingly the opening formula pronounced by the Ritual Master to open the altar with talismans and consecrate the ritual implements are all virtually identical, even where they may be elided or re-arranged according to different altar or Ritual Master's custom.

[62] This passage is presented in the chapter on the Literature of the Wū.

Lǐ Fēng 李風 Kāishān Wáng Miào 開山王廟 Black-Head transmission-branch



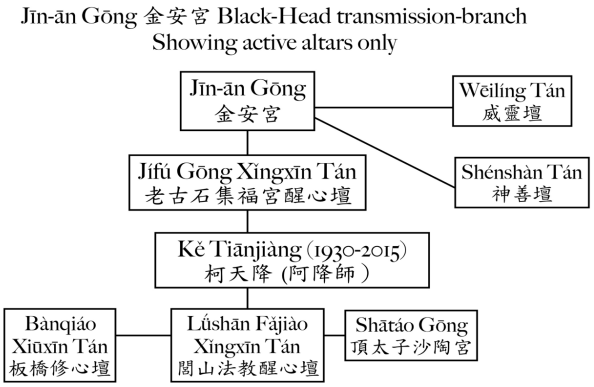
This Black-Head tradition-group is prominently characterized by use of a circular brass rattle called the ba-linng 巴鈴, and except for the so-called Lián Jí Chéng 連吉成 transmission-branch in Táinán, the horn so definitive of the Ritual Master tradition in most forms is here conspicuous by its absence (the horn is rare to unknown in Pénghú as well).[63] Furthermore, in all Black-Head performances of the Invitation of the Spirits ceremony, male gods are invoked first followed by a dedicated set of goddesses second. Most altars in Táinán have different melodies for goddesses, with many but not all pausing for an intermission in between. Also, most Black-Head altars, from Ānpíng to the eastern suburbs of Yǒngkāng, when invoking Madame Línshuǐ all sing one particular line of her invocation in the same unusual way.[64]

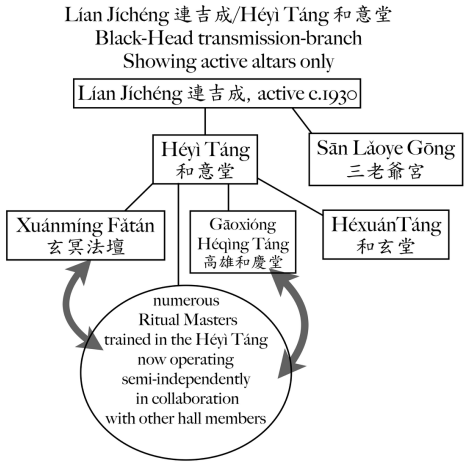
Hence we have a remarkably consistent tradition that encompasses several different sub-branches, which in turn exhibit many further distinguishing details, but while still clearly embodying a coherent Black-Head tradition-group. That so many particulars and structural elements are shared among different transmission-branches suggests that this Black-Head rite developed from a common cluster of related precursor traditions, and was established in the urban Táinán city and port areas early enough to witness these slightly different Black-Head transmission-branches proliferating in the mid-to-late 19th C.

Though the Qīng-era Taiwanese gazetteers give us the Hakka Master 客仔師 (k̍eih-â-saî), the earliest glimpse of the Táinán-area Minor Rite is the early Japanese-era Ānpíng County

[63] I have asked why there is no horn used, and in typical fashion been told "the master didn't teach it."
[64] In the Línshuǐ Fūrén invocation 臨水夫人 HST 1:26, one line is sung with a unique pause after the fourth character, with the remaining three characters 媽也知 sung with what are usually opening-line tones, thus creating a dramatic shift that gives greater emphasis falling on the second couplet: "If one has the intent to invite the Mother, then the Mother too knows; with no intent to invite the Mother, the Mother too comes."有心請媽媽也知, 無心請媽媽也來.

Gazetteer section on Ritual Official 法官.[65] How long would such traditions need to be established for it to become so major and noteworthy a feature as to merit such detailed depiction in the Ānpíng Gazetteer? We have seen enough other material in Fujianese gazetteers to know that Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums were ubiquitous. Furthermore, with elements of the Ritual Master tradition embedded in the temple-cult itself, and Ritual Master ceremony deemed mandatory to the consecration of new temples, not to mention the centrality of Ritual Master healing ceremony in the premodern culture, Ritual Masters of perhaps various lineage backgrounds must have been active in Táinán since the 17th C. Hence our question is not so much when Ritual Masters appeared in Táinán, but when the particular forms witnessed now, and traceable to the late 19th C. at the latest, became established in Ānpíng and Táinán proper.[66]





[65] This source and all other gazetteer information is likewise presented in chapter 4.

[66] This general assumption, that the Táinán Minor Rite must have been transmitted from Pénghú has been voiced by many informants and local observers, and is formally argued by Wú Yǒng-méng. But as a Ritual Master of the Pénghú altar in Táinán I observed put it, there are too many differences in ritual form and style between Táinán and Pénghú forms of the Minor Rite; even though the invocations are (in the shared "core") largely the same, ritual performance

The distribution of the Táinán Black-Head tradition-group reflects the former inland water-commerce of the area, as previously there was only one other temple outside Ānpíng and Táinán proper affiliated with this tradition-group, the Lóng Shānsì 龍山寺 in Sì Kūnshēn 四鯤鯓, a former islet-village to the south of the bay that in the Míng and Qīng lay between Ānpíng and Táinán. [67] In recent decades a small handful of Táinán-style Black Head altars have been established elsewhere, from the eastern suburb of Yǒngkāng to Jiāyì City, Gāoxióng and even one in Bànqiáo notable for its female members.[68] But these are all relatively recent developments; historically speaking, in Táiwān this Black-Head tradition-group is exclusive to the urban environs of the Prefectural City and its former bayfront port of Ānpíng.

Previous researchers have been unable to demonstrate the origins of these different forms of Minor Rite in Táinán. Many have assumed that all such Minor Rite traditions were transmitted from Pénghú to the Táinán area, where it somehow evolved into a completely different Prefectural City style.[69] This theory of a Pénghú origin for the Táinán Minor Rite is on its face is simply implausible, as the differences between the Pénghú and Táinán tradition-groups are simply too great.[70] Though certain early Táinán Ritual Masters, such as Lǐ Fēng, are said by Wáng Zhāowén to have been from Pénghú, the form of Minor Rite that flowed from his tradition is clearly not the

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[67] The Lóng Shān Sì 龍山寺 at Sì Kūnshēn used to have its own Minor Rite troupe, which reportedly bore close resemblance to the Ānping tradition. An early ethnographic study of this village was written

[68] The Èr Wáng Miào 二王廟, whose Minor Rite troupe is still quite active, was established by their earlier Ritual Master in 1967 who learned the tradition from the prolific Táinán Ritual Master, Xǔ Fǔ 許福 (1909-1977) See Dài et. al., 《臺南傳統法派及其儀式》, 58-63.

[69] A proponent of this Pénghú origin for the Táinán Minor Rite is Wú Yǒngméng, 《臺灣本土宗教信仰》, 175.

[70] The Pénghú-based Ritual Masters at the Chìfàn Tào Gōng in Táinán County strongly rejected the notion that the Táinán-area Minor Rite was somehow developed from a Pénghú precursor, despite the similar invocations shared to varying degrees by essentially all Ritual Master/Minor Rite traditions from Pénghú to central and southern Táiwān. The differences in performance and liturgical structure are simply too great for such an adaptation to be plausible.

Pénghú rite, nor a simple adaptation of it. As I demonstrate elsewhere in this study, numerous pieces of evidence, from the testimony of De Groot and Kenneth Dean, to video material from Xiàmén, to symbols in the Minor Rite texts which regard Bǎoshēng Dàdì as a Lord-of-the-Rite, all tend to confirm that the Táinán-area Black-Head tradition-group originated in the Tóng-ān/Xiàmén region, though similar forms of practice may be more broadly distributed than is yet known.

The Nánchǎng Bǎo-ān Gōng 南廠保安宮 Xújiǎ 徐甲 Tradition-group

Though altars practicing this form of the Minor Rite now numerically predominate in both southern Táiwān and Táiwān generally, by all accounts this particular tradition, which gives us the Chéngxīn Tán collection examined in this study, did not appear in Táinán City until the middle of the Japanese period. However, comparison of certain opening formula with those studied by Liú Zhīwàn, among other content, shows that this particular tradition-group is a manifestation of a more widely distributed form of Ritual Master practice. Moreover, many rural Ritual Masters perform similar traditions which may either have been derived from the Bǎo-ān Gōng in the 20th C., or represent related practices paralleling its earlier predecessors.

Notable characteristics of this tradition, or lineage-group 派, include first and foremost its prominent and extensive relationships with the Red-Headed rites of the Língbǎo Daoist priests, who likewise take the Realized Man Xú 徐甲真人 as Ancestral Master of their Red-Headed rites. The shared features include commencing ritual with invocation of the Three Emissaries of the Three Realms 三界使者, using the same invocation text and a similar melody, as well as numerous rites such as Smiting the Citadel 打城. Moreover, the first part of the Bǎo-ān Gōng Invitation of

the Spirits liturgy features a long, incanted portion that not only includes numerous, standard Daoist invocations, but invokes a pantheon headed by the Three Pure Ones and other Daoist high gods, all in the manner of Daoist-style invitation of the spirits.

In her groundbreaking study of Táinán-area Minor Rite lineage-descent, Wáng Zhāowén reports that first-generation Ritual Masters of the Bǎo-ān Gōng, Wǔ Luóhàn 吳羅漢 and Wǔ Tiānsì 吳天賜 learned and exchanged with the eminent Daoist High Priest of the Chén clan, Chén Wēng 陳翁(1890-1966).[71] This raises the distinct possibility that the Bǎo-ān Gōng tradition and its cult of Xújiǎ Zhēnrén was created, or at least established by this generation of Ritual Masters as a direct result of their interaction with Chén-family Daoist priests.

This possibility grows more likely when we examine how Xújiǎ is represented and invoked in the Bǎo-ān Gōng Minor Rite system. The invocation for Xújiǎ, it turns out, is clearly based on canonical Daoist stanzas in the *Scripture of the Jade Pivot* 玉樞經 for Pǔhuà Tiānzūn 普化天尊, the figure who most often begins the Red-Headed liturgies of the Táinán-area Língbǎo Daoist priests. So too the opening formula called the "Jade Void" 玉虛 (HST 1:1; or, Jade Talisman 玉符 CXT 1). Here, the invocation for Xújiǎ is compared with its primary inspiration, the stanza for Pǔhuà Tiānzūn in the *Scripture of the Jade Pivot*, with similar phrasing underlined.

CXT 60 徐甲眞人

拜請閻山大教主	化行十方救萬民
左手執起九天慶	右手執鞭並雷霆
慈悲降下魔身粉	金鞭一指鬼滅形
奉請九天千眼帝	騰駕麒麟下天庭
真身來化身來	翻天來到地來
收捉世間無道鬼	凶芽粉碎不留停
珈羅弟子神通力	步罡踏斗到壇前
法門弟子專拜請	徐甲眞人降臨來

[71] Wáng Zhāowén 王釗雯, 《臺南市廟宮小法團之研究》, 68-9.

九天應元雷聲普化天尊玉樞寶經　ZHDZ 31:300
天尊前而說偈曰
無上玉清王　統天三十六　九天普化君
化形十方界　披髮騎麒麟　赤腳躡層冰
手把九天炁　嘯風鞭雷霆　能以智慧力
攝伏諸魔精　濟度長夜魂　利益於眾生
如彼銀河水　千眼千月輪　誓於未來世
永屬天尊教

Notable is the fact that Pǔhuà Tiānzūn is depicted as a Ritual Master, with the streaming hair and bare feet of the Wū, the bodily practices adopted from Spirit-mediums by Ritual Masters to indicate their divinization through liturgical identification. Furthermore, as previous studies (Schipper 1985) have indicated, there is really very little in the historical literature concerning Xújiǎ to recommend his veneration as an Ancestral Master. Rather, Xújiǎ is depicted as Lǎozi's creditor, whom Lǎozi revived from the dead by means of talismans. As such the original story of Lǎozi and Xújiǎ in the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* depicts, I believe, relations between the Daoist clergy and their secular sponsors, rather than between two strata of ritual performers. The interpretation of Xújiǎ as a Ritual Method Ancestral Master is surely a much later development, probably post-dating the production of the Míng Daoist Canon, as Xújiǎ was never called upon to serve as a figure in Daoist-brand Ritual Method during the heyday of such Daoist textual production. Whatever the case, the specific cult of Xújiǎ on which his eponymous Minor Rite tradition has been based is clearly modeled on Pǔhuà Tiānzūn, who serves as the most common deity invoked at the very beginning of the Daoist's own Red-Headed liturgies.

Conclusion

As living presences made immanent through spirit-possession and spiritistic communication of many kinds, this intense immanence which so characterizes the living gods of the Common Religion is the product of a sophisticated ideology, and a series of interconnected ritual performances which serve to create outposts of the sacred within the world of everyday experience. It is not enough to merely set up an altar; it must be periodically maintained by re-purification, and spiritual recharge of its incense fire and spirit-images by pilgrimage to the ancestral temple. If mediumistic communication is conducted, then regional custom mandates that such an altar enshrine and maintain the spirit-armies of the Five Camps. And if an altar-group establishes a temple, and seeks public recognition as a member of the community of temples, they must demonstrate the authoritative legitimacy of their gods by first securing the seal of approval from the Jade Emperor, and at some propitious time should ideally conduct a Daoist Jiào to further energize and legitimize their temple as a public institution of worship.

All such acts whereby the cultic elements of the religion are established or reproduced– including, in most cases, domestic altars to ancestors– must be conducted by a ritual expert. Having established a viable and living cult, it must be maintained, a process again requiring the services of ritual experts. In the Mínnán littoral and most of Táiwān, the ritual experts principally responsible for this role are Ritual Masters practicing more Tantric-Popular forms of Ritual Method, a condition which must have obtained for centuries, despite the flexibility of the religious culture, as major symbols of the Tantric-Popular Ritual Method have become integrated into the structure of the temple-cult itself.

Moreover, temples are organized. Organization must be recognized as a fundamental

premise of the religion itself, and arises from its most basic theological and territorial premises. Such organization takes numerous forms, from the assembly of temple pantheons and temple committees, to precinct organizations linked to other temples, as well as links of genealogy between gods and the Ancestral Temple from which their spirit and incense fire was taken. Ultimately, the horizontal linkages among temples into precinct alliances demonstrates a direct relationship with the performance of large-scale Daoist Jiào ceremony, and further illustrates how the impact of Daoism on the Common Religion is not so much found within the cult and its symbols, but in its larger patterns of orientation. Within the temple and its precinct, the Spirit-medium and Ritual Master prevail, and it is their symbols which have primarily shaped the particular form and function of temple religion.

Conclusion

In this study, I have sought to show how patterns of interaction and variable integration among different ritual traditions have fundamentally shaped both these traditions themselves, and the overall religious culture formed among them, centered around the temples and altars of the Common Religion. In such an interconnected cultural ecosystem, with its variable frame of reference, the component domains of the temple-cult, Ritual Master traditions, and the complex arrangements of post-Sòng Daoism cannot be understood in isolation from one another. Nor are these merely "mixed" in their interconnections. Rather, they exist within negotiated structural arrangements which reflect the different symbolic and performative natures of these ritual spheres, while also indicating the historical patterns of opposition and accommodation which lie behind these arrangements.

Thus, the deathless divinities of the Dào, always held by Daoists as the antithesis to the deified dead of local society, still stand in spatial and symbolic opposition to the deified human beings and environmental spirits of the Common Religion, in both the Jiào altar, in in the symbolic relationship between ordinary temples and the Lord of Heaven Temple, modeled on the Jiào altar itself. Mediating between these two opposed symbolic orders are the martial guardians of the Ritual Method synthesis –subordinated local gods and demons, led by mythic Ritual Masters deified as Ancestral Masters. This historic, performative, and mythic confrontation between these deified Ritual Masters and the fierce local gods of the Spirit-mediums is likewise encoded in the ensuing hierarchy, in which Ancestral Masters and Lords-of-the-Rite, standing as the Ritual Master's own alter-ego, command these deities as subordinates. Thus, the integration witnessed in this religious world by no means negates or effaces the differences and tensions among these

different strata of the religious culture; rather it embodies and accommodates these differences, just as the variable frame reveals its different focal points with the procession of nested liturgical cycles.

Furthermore, I have argued that the incorporation of Ritual Method deities and subordinate pantheons into the structure of the temple-cult indicates first the historic relationships between these more Tantric-Popular forms of Ritual Method and the temple, while further demonstrating how collective rites for the temple and its community stand in direct and necessary relation to more individual or person-oriented rites of healing and fortune-enhancement. In other words, the "minor rituals" 小法事 which have traditionally been regarded as the Ritual Master's primary responsibility must be seen as direct and more personal manifestations of the extended temple community's ongoing cycles of ritual, in which such person-oriented rites (often performed form the temple community en-masse) –form epicycles within longer orbital periods of the liturgical cycle.

Moreover, as these deities of the Ritual Master, from the Five Camps and members of the 36 Official Generals pantheon to the more important Ancestral Masters such as Chén Jìnggū, Master Pǔ-ān, and Lord-of-the-Rite Zhāng –not to mention Celestial Master Zhāng– are all worshipped by ordinary people in temples, this situation significantly challenges any strong distinction between gods worshipped by common people and ritual experts. With these Prime Marshals and Ancestral Masters invoked for both temple rites and healing ceremony, while worshipped by Ritual Masters and ordinary people on a daily basis, we see that there is no real difference between the deities of these ritual experts and the common people. The incorporation of local deities into Minor Rite ceremony to a degree unseen in Daoist ritual underscores the

complete interpenetration and mutual engenderment of temple religion and Tantric-Popular traditions of the Ritual Method.

In this symbolic integration, we are further reminded that in many cases, deity-cults arose and spread in connection with the practices of ritual experts. This pattern becomes more evident when we recognize that Spirit-mediums are ritual experts as well. The cult of Zhēnwǔ, for example, which exerted a formative influence on Ritual Method Daoism, exemplifies this trend, as the god's iconography is that of a Spirit-medium in trance, and as such came to serve as the prototype for the Wū-styled image of the Ritual Master, who by imitating Zhēnwǔ's bare feet and streaming hair further personified the deity by these bodily practices of resemblance. Another deity closely linked with Ritual Masters is the Third Prince Nézhà, who as Prime Marshal of the Central Altar gained a near-universal presence on the altars of temples throughout southeastern China and beyond. As I have shown in this study, this designation of the Central Altar arose from his incorporation into the central of the Three Altars pantheon, while this adaptation further reflects both the Third Prince's major presence in the Tantric-Popular domain of Ritual Method practice, and most likely the importance of Spirit-medium performance in conjunction with his cult. Thus, the symbols and practices of Mínnán (and other regional) Common Religion show that Spirit-mediums and Ritual Masters have played prominent roles in shaping the temple-cult and its liturgical cycles, and must be regarded as integral to its post-Sòng manifestations.

As has been evident throughout this study, the symbolic world of Ritual Masters and Spirit-mediums presents a highly militarized construction of the spiritual power, one in which a paradigm of embodiment creates a comprehensive methodology of ritual action. At one level, this prominent focus on the body reflects the highly world-affirmative orientation of the religion, its

concern with healing, and its spiritualization of the phenomenal world through the deification of human beings. Moreover, this religious world is premised on what I call a spiritistic paradigm, in which spiritual beings descend into the human realm to enjoy offerings, inhabit spirit-images, take possession of Spirit-mediums. In other words, symbolic and human bodies play a central and prominent role in manifesting the immanent deities of the religion. While bodies form the primary medium through which the gods manifest, the ritual systems of the religion, and particularly those of the Ritual Method, consistently present a highly embodied vision of the spirit-world, in which spiritual beings possess a kind of substantive bodily form. By means of compulsive violence and propitiatory offerings, the spirits held responsible for causing illness and misfortune can then be either assuaged through such enriching nourishment, or compelled by spiritualized violence, wrought ultimately by other, similarly embodied spiritual beings commanded by the Ritual Master.

These processes of ritual healing often involve a series of bodies, real and symbolic, material and imaginary, in which the material bodies (spirit-images, Spirit-mediums, human actors, and substitute-bodies) provide a media through which spiritual transfers may be enacted, and ritual objectives obtained. In addition, bodies require sustenance, shelter, and clothing, and so a major proportion of all religious practice is oriented toward providing these sustaining necessities to spiritual beings, first and most emphatically through food offerings, but also through the clothing of spirit-images, the burning of symbolic clothes for spirits of the dead, and even the bathing of both spirit-images and provision of bathing facilities to the departed. The spirit-soldiers responsible for the compulsive violence at the business-end of the ritual system are likewise offered special spirit-money bearing the printed image of military provisions such as armor and weapons, this in addition to copious food offerings, and grass and water for the horses. The paradigm of

embodiment is comprehensive in its premises and applications, and thus where it appears throughout the lyric invocation genre, we see how this fundamental logic of embodiment and military ritual action has informed the Ritual Method synthesis from its inception, and should be seen as an ancient aspect of Chinese religion which found its fullest articulation in the exorcistic systems of the Ritual Method movement.

At a broader level, this military construction of ritual power presents an important addition to, and contrast with the better-known "Bureaucratic" and "Imperial" metaphors, which scholars from Kristofer Schipper to Stephen Feuchtwang have identified as major organizing principles in not just Daoism, but in local cults as well.[1] While clearly, a bureaucratic conception of the spiritual world permeates religious practice, in the Common Religion and Ritual Method traditions, the ultimate application of ritual power, even where directed through bureaucratic techniques, depends upon the coercive, bodily force by spirit-soldiers and other subordinates. The pathogenic spirits responsible for disease, drought, and other misfortunes are not frightened off by the reading of a memorial or the filing of paperwork, but by the spirit-armies and fierce Prime Marshals deployed in response to such petitions.

In an early article on Ritual Masters and Daoist priests in Táinán, "The Written Memorial in Taoist Ceremony," Kristofer Schipper observed that one key difference between Daoist performances of Red-Headed (Tantric-Popular) rites, and those performed by the Red-Headed Ritual Masters themselves was that the Daoists always employed written documents, while the Ritual Masters as a rule did not.[2] One further factor that should be added to this distinction is the

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[1] Stephan Feuchtwang, *The imperial metaphor: Popular religion in China* (London: Routledge, 1991); Schipper, *Vernacular and Classical Ritual.*"

[2] Kristopher Schipper, "The Written Memorial in Taoist Ceremonies," in *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, Emily Martin and Arthur P. Wolf, eds. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 309-324.

importance of command-flags in Tantric-Popular Ritual Master ceremony, and the flags of the Five Camps in particular. These triangular command-flags are iconic items in Chinese military culture, so much so they form a common motif in theater, where martial figures are routinely distinguished by the array of these flags worn on their backs, a feature prominently shared by spirit-images, spirit-sedan-chairs, and the giant costumes of Spirit-generals 將爺 worn in ritual processions. While written memorials form a variable in ritual practice, and are in fact often employed by Ritual Masters of many backgrounds, these command flags are a fixture of any ceremony specifically involving the deployment of the Five Camps, and most temples enshrine an assembly of these flags in the installation of Five Camps Heads on the temple altar. As instruments of command and communication, these flags represent an important military alternative to the written memorial of the civil bureaucracy, and point to the largely neglected role of military culture in traditional Chinese society. The flags also indicate the different spheres symbolized by written memorials of the Daoists, and command flags wielded by Ritual Masters (and sometimes Spirit-mediums): while Daoist theology, and its written memorials reflect a politically-centralizing construction of religious authority, in the realm of the Ritual Master and Spirit-medium, religious authority, however constructed, ultimately devolves to the concentration of coercive force at the immediate level. In other words, all power is local, or as the saying goes, "Heaven is High, and the Emperor is far away" 天高皇帝遠.

What bureaucratic, imperial, and military paradigms of ritual action all have in common is that they reflect how people understood and experienced the construction of power in society. Yet the prominence of spiritualized enforcers at the popular level serves as a potent reminder that while literary, civil, and benevolently imperial conceptions of power are reflected throughout the religion,

for the overwhelming majority of people in traditional Chinese society, all power was ultimately expressed through a regime of corporal violence. The political dimension of this rule by violence is epitomized by the near-universal enshrinement of the two deified yámen-runners, Sire Seven and Sire Eight 七爺八爺, in Fujianese and Taiwanese temples. For beneath the local magistrate, the actual force of the imperial state was implemented by these dreaded yámen runners 衙役, whom Guo Qitao has further identified with the Wúchāng 五猖, or Five Fury Spirits, a pentad of fierce exorcistic spirits who likewise appear as mainstays of Tantric-Popular Ritual Method pantheons across traditional southeast China.[3] On the Wúchāng, Guo writes:

> Wuchang were conceived of as five furious and armed soldiers, who functioned like divine bailiffs–the imaginary infernal counterparts of yamen runners (or even policemen in Republican times)...For these ordinary villagers, the magistrate, not to mention the subprefect or emperor, was far away in the county seat; it was the yamen runners–often local toughs, hated and frightening–who went down to local villages to carry out the magistrate's orders...Similarly, it was Wuchang who was thought to hold supernatural sway in local villages, as symbolized by the small Wuchang altar set up in local villages, ready at any time to carry out a divine writ from the Grand Emperor Cishan, either for punishment or reward (but mainly punishment).[4]

Here, Guo points to linked phenomena of central importance to understanding traditional Chinese society and religion. First is the relative sparseness of the imperial state itself, and the distant quality of officialdom and the emperor. And within this sparse state framework, actual power was wielded by a subaltern class of "hated and frightening" enforcers who executed state commands not through bureaucratic process, but by bodily compulsion. Finally, this situation was translated into religious symbols and ritual performance, as this particular construction of power captured a central aspect of people's lived experience: real power lay ultimately with fearsome subordinates who wielded the compulsory violence at the foundations of the political order.

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[3] See for example, *Guǎngjì Tán* 2:159, 2:220, 2:392-6.
[4] Guo, *Exorcism and Money*, 77.

The importance of these interconnected factors has been largely obscured by the prevailing literary sources, and the perennial elevation of the literary and civil over the martial (and technical) in the status-hierarchies of traditional Chinese society. But the sources examined in this study foreground this violent and martial dimension of power in traditional Chinese society and its religious culture. Nor can this martial and embodied domain of ritual be dismissed as "heterodox" or marginal; these religious symbols and practices stood at the center of traditional society, and formed an integrated paradigm of ritual action encompassing healing rites and community protection. When viewed against the violent realities of traditional Chinese society –including the exercise of state power through public executions, punishment by the cangue, and torture as a routine aspect of official investigation, the purely civil ceremony of elite culture, be it that of Official Religion, or the highly literary modes of conservative Daoist ritual, appear more as sanitized portraits of elite power, masking the actual realization of elite control in violence and physical compulsion.

Beyond the protected minority of office-holding elites, however, the realities of such an intensely violent society could not be avoided. Translated into religious terms, the importance and social construction of such violence is perhaps most clearly expressed in the subordinate spirits attached to most temple deities, and which largely predominate within Ritual Method pantheons. Thus, the most bureaucratic and civil of deities, the City God, like his terrestrial counterparts has underlings who execute his will, in his case either the pair of deified yámen runners mentioned above, or the pair Black Impermanence and White Impermanence 黑白無常, on whom Sires Seven and Eight are closely modeled. The Emperor of the Eastern Peak 東嶽大帝, lord of the dead, is attended by Ox-head and Horse-face 牛頭馬面, who manhandle the deceased in their

course through the underworld courts. Even goddesses like Māzǔ have fearsome subordinates, in her case the pair of subordinated demons Thousand-league Eyes 千里眼 and Fair-winds Ears 順風耳, whose clearly demonic figures always accompany spirit-images of Māzǔ on her altars and on procession in her sedan-chairs. Many subordinates, like Sires Seven and Eight, are detachable and appear in the retinue of countless temple deities. As mentioned above, the Five Fury Spirits, often featured in Ritual Master ceremony, became associated with Grand Emperor Zhāng of Císhān 祠山張大帝 in Huīzhōu.[5]

The importance of martial subordinates is likewise a central factor in the integration of Ritual Method pantheons into the structure of the temple cult, as these subordinates, like the Five Camps, Female Five Camps, and Five Furies, come complete with a compelling ritual repertoire, in which these symbols play central roles in rites of healing and protection. The same can also be said of Daoist Prime Marshals, many of whom are likewise incorporated into the Mínnán iteration of the 36 Official Generals.

Leaving aside parallel issues in Daoism (and Buddhism) for the moment, in the temple-cults of the Common Religion, the importance and universality of martial subordinates gives ample testimony to how the construction of power in the society at large was rendered into religious symbols and ritual practices. While main deities may variably resemble magistrates, mother-figures, or generals, the actual power to accomplish ritual objectives usually falls to a

[5] This major deity is among the handful of temple deities invoked at the end of the Chén-family Invitation of the Spirits liturgy as reproduced in Ōfuchi (《中國人の宗教儀禮》, 259.). The trans-regional prominence of such deities underscores the problems raised when using the term "local religion" to label what I have called the Common Religion.

subaltern class of fierce underlings, who use violence and the threats of violence to control pathogenic spirits and protect worshippers from affliction.

The hierarchies of power and authority expressed in these pantheons directly reflect the same issues of political authority and social order experienced in human affairs. Hence, the gods themselves and their fearsome underlings are legitimized through imperial signifiers provided by Daoist ritual, thus linking all these integrated pantheons, including those of the lowly spirit-soldiers, into a force dedicated to the protection of society. Though legitimized through vertical linkages of authority, power is ultimately executed by low-status subordinates. While such hierarchies are often articulated in Daoist texts, where the martial Ritual Method spirits always occupy the lower ranks, just above the deified human beings of the Common Religion, this same pattern is repeated in the temple pantheons of the Common Religion itself, with main deities situated above their various bailiffs and military subordinates. Hence, this hierarchical construction of power, with its emphasis on the role of low-status martial subordinates, stands as a common thread shared by both temple cults and post-Sòng Daoism. As something of a cultural universal, the prominence of such agents of sanctioned violence, though obscured by other kinds of elite texts, looms large when examination turns to the temple pantheons and Ritual Master liturgies at the center of community religion.

These performative texts of the Táinán-area Minor Rite depict the religious world as seen from a vantage within the temple-cult and its intersecting cycles of community and healing ritual. Just as spirit-images of the gods dominate the temple-space, so too the iconographic depictions of deities and their spiritual actions predominate in the lyric invocations used to summon these immanent gods into the ritual arena. Likewise, statements outlining the basic ideology and

practices of the religion accompany these textual depictions of the gods, while ritual commands enact objectives by their pronouncement. Unlike narrative dramas, which transport their viewers into distant, fantastic realms, the Minor Rite invocations primarily depict the gods in the same contexts in which worshippers encounter them: in temples, before altars, in ritual performances and ritual processions. Thus, in these performative texts, we find lyric stanzas which, more than any other genre of written literature, directly reflect the lived religion of community temples, as ultimately the invocations are not written texts simply about the temple-gods, when performed, they are the lyric ritual commands which animate, maintain, and mobilize the sanctity of the temple itself.

Appendix

Chéngxīn Tán (CXT) Invocation Volume Table of Contents 誠心壇咒語本目錄

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101 刑府王爺
102 紀府千歲
103 范府千歲
104 倪府千歲
105 何府千歲
106 溫府千歲
107 刑府天王
108 薛府千歲(2)
109 康府千歲
110 楊府千歲
111 應化天君(普化天尊？)
112 富美蕭府大帝
其他
113 白蓮聖母
114 都天元帥
115 領兵爐太保
115 押兵盧二娘
117 張府千歲
118 降龍神尊者
119 伏虎神尊者
120 齊天大聖
教主
121 玉皇教主
122 通天教主
123 太上老君 (太清大主教)
其他
124 福州五靈公
125 關平太子
126 關臺聖王
127 三元盤古
128 咒水真人
129 大法張天師
130 水仙尊王
131 四海龍王
132 保生大帝(醫靈吳真君)
133 列位眾神
134 保安尊王(1)[郭聖王]
135 保安尊王(2)[郭聖王]
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137 王孫三相公
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138 太乙哪吒
139 哪吒三太子
140 哪吒太子
141 哪吒太子
其他
142 輔順將軍
143 玄天上帝
144 孔府舍人
145 孫臏二將
146 周倉將軍
147 北方黑煞
148 開天鄧元帥

保生大帝
149 保生大帝
150 保生大帝
151 保生大帝

152 五顯大帝
五營聖者
153 法天張聖者
154 蕭聖者
155 劉聖者
156 連聖者
157 中壇元帥
36 官將 (其餘四仙姑與五營聖者)
158 溫元帥
159 康元帥
160 馬元帥
161 趙元帥
162 高元帥
163 岳元帥
164 咒水真人
165 鄧元帥
166 辛元帥
167 馬虎大雷將
168 捉鬼大將
169 縛鬼大將
170 枷鬼大將
171 鎖鬼大將
172 虎枷大雷神
173 吞精大將軍
174 食鬼大將軍
175 移山大將軍
176 倒海大將軍
177 都天殷元帥
178 馬元帥
179 江仙官
180 黃仙官
181 金舍人
182 孔舍人

183 協曹太保
184 白府金人
185 雷霆申元帥
186 趙王元帥
187 馬府王爺
188 花園童子
189 花公花媽

190 雷聲普化大天尊
191 某某神明
192 龍虎二將
193 桃花玄女
194 洞中太乙君
195 朱角孔明
196 三官大帝
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Héshèng Táng (HST) Invocation Book Collection Table of Contents 和勝堂小法咒語本總目

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76 喝營 北營
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78 三十六官將
79 北方黑煞將
80 二十八宿星君
81 太乙真君
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83 張聖者神咒
84 蕭聖者神咒
85 劉聖者神咒
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1 南海觀音佛祖
2 清水祖師（一）
3 清水祖師（二）
4 三坪祖師
5 達摩祖師
6 閻山聖祖
7 七祖黃仙師
8 藥皇大帝
9 神農大帝
10 四殿下
11 保生大帝
12 孫真人
13 許真人
14 關夫子
15 北方黑煞將
16 北極上帝
17 葉府千歲
18 朱府千歲
19 朝府千歲
20 托塔天王
21 金吒大太子
22 木吒二太子
23 哪吒三太子
24 十二瘟王
25 五年千歲
26 行年瘟太歲
27 莫府代巡
28 李府代巡
29 張府代巡
30 蕭府大帝
31 魏府千歲
32 五福大帝
33 功曹大帝
34 扶機大聖
35 五雷星君
36 馬府千歲
37 黃府千歲
38 林府千歲
39 萬府千歲
40 雷府千歲
41 白府千歲
42 包府千歲
43 吳府千歲
44 紀府千歲
45 劉府千歲
46 金府千歲
47 何府千歲
48 龍樹醫王
49 火德星君
50 縣城隍爺
51 東嶽大帝
52 九天教主龍樹王
53 九醫黃仙官
54 開漳聖王
55 雪山聖者
56 開火門，執黑旗，先過火口咒

佛，道咒本 HST 3

1 四方如來佛
2 蓮燈大天尊
3 彌力大天尊
4 濟公禪師
5 天皇大天尊
6 地皇大天尊
7 人皇大天尊
8 目連尊者
9 多聞天王大金剛
10 持國天王大金剛
11 噌長天王大金剛
12 廣目天王大金剛
13 降龍尊者
14 伏虎尊者
15 韋馱尊者
16 護法尊者
17 雷聲普化天尊
18 三清教主
19 普庵大教主
20 普庵一教主
21 三仙九猴大教主
22 三官大帝
23 南斗北斗二星君
24 太陽太陰二星君
25 張天師
26 七祖仙師
27 鬼谷仙師
28 五顯大帝
29 四海龍王（一）
30 四海龍王（二）
31 寒山和尚
32 女媧娘娘
33 雲仙姑
34 瓊氏仙姑
35 碧氏仙姑
36 桃花聖母
37 金靈聖母
38 李三娘媽
39 龍溪朱晚娘

少用咒語本：元帥，將軍 HST 4

1 本壇諸猛將
2 伏魔七星劍將軍
3 素車白馬大將軍
4 七星黑旗金道長
5 天皇尺將軍
6 金鞭蛇聖者
7 法鼓將兄弟
8 仁濟江仙官
9 司命灶君
10 黃府二使公
11 御吏官
12 武吏官
13 吳理刑廳
14 陰陽都統司
15 善惡速報司
16 巡爐鳴鴨使者
17 桃氏先鋒
18 九天劉元帥
19 鐵公將軍
20 童子爺
21 一郎君神
22 二郎君神
23 什家將
24 康元帥
25 趙元帥
26 黑元帥
27 白元帥
28 捉大將
29 縛大將
30 枷大將
31 鎖大將
32 風輪周元帥
33 火輪田元帥
34 兩啓倪府大將軍
35 兩啓輔義大將軍
36 兩啓輔順大將軍
37 兩啓輔顯大將軍
38 兩啓輔天大將軍（陳大巡）
39 紅令大將軍

做法事常用咒語本 HST 5

1 燒香蜜唸，開光咒，
玄靈北斗星君與延生真符
紫光北斗星君與渡厄真符
紫微北斗星君與保命真符
2 擎羊北斗星君與益算真符
輪迴北斗星君與消災真符
護安北斗星君與散禍真符
濟渡北斗星君與扶衰真符
3 當山孔真君，拜請祖師點蓮燈
4 五東方
5 五斗咒
6 踏火咒
7 勤李何紀四仙姑與獻敬
8 西方咒唸與五方星君
9 下壇咒
10 退壇咒
11 治病咒
12 二十八宿
13 大聖北斗
14 王孫三相公
15 北極上帝（北方黑煞將）

祭星補運咒語 HST 6

1 福德正神
2 口白「鳴鑼法鼓...召請五方諸神」
3 請東方咒
4 請南方咒
5 請西方咒
6 請北方咒
7 請中方咒
8 口白「敕煞」；咒「初杯初獻」
9 口白「敕煞...一太歲星君」
10 咒「再添再酌...」；口白「敕煞...」
11 「奉請東方甲乙木...」
12 咒「叁杯大道...」口白「敕煞神來...」
13 口白「敕煞天神聞吾法鼓...」
14 咒「祖師為吾來化食」
15 口白「三牲酒禮...」
16 口白「回去五方...」
17 咒「一送兇星出大廳」
18 本壇諸猛將
19 巡爐烏鴨使者
20 中央元帥黃有明
21 閻山聖祖
22 雷聲普化大天尊
23 哪吒元帥
24 大聖北斗七元君 [連續五頁]
25 改厄密念
26 王孫三相公

27 九天普化君
28 口白「太上召清」
29「天地自然，穢氣氛散」
30「混元教主太上老君」
31 口白「龍角吹來鬧裁裁，召請五方歲煞降臨來」
32 咒「陽起紛紛召東斗」
33 咒「陽起紛紛召南斗」
34 咒「陽起紛紛召西斗」
35 咒「陽起紛紛召北斗」
36 咒「陽起紛紛召中斗」
37「日吉時良，天地開張…召請東方甲乙寅卯木歲煞星君」
38 上文繼續；咒「初酹獻禮古興」
39 口白「日吉時良，天地開張…召請天煞，地煞星君」
40 上文繼續；咒「再酹再獻酒筵開」
41 口白「日吉時良，天地開張…太歲星君，太陽星君…」
42 咒「三杯大道自然通」；口白「神來未來真(直)符使者摧排」
43 讀訴(疏)文
44 口白「諸位歲煞星君請你來天宮論天宮」
45「祖師為吾來送煞」
46 咒「一送兇星雜煞神押出大廳」
47 口白「天色清，地色靈，押送兇星出外庭」
48 祭產斗典
49「九天衛房聖母娘娘，池頭夫人，血池度產司夫人…」
50 上文繼續
51「加聖位如前請，東方青年產血及[衄?]夫人…」
52 上文繼續
53 訴(疏)文
54 王孫三相公

法事咒語本：進錢補運，栽花換斗（二冊）HST 7

1 收，放五營
2 帳前發兵
3 栽花換斗：十二宮婆姐；送子花婆姐；栽花婆姐；拜請十二月栽花；二十四婆姐
4 乞[祈]雨：清水大祖師；五海大龍王
5 進錢補運：五龍鞭；扶童入地府
6 收除押煞金神
7 取魂
8 火龍火馬
9 大聖北斗
10 王孫三相公

Occasions for Performance of the Invocation of the Spirits 請神 (aka. Purification of the Altar 清壇 or Unfolding the Altar 羅壇):

1.When ordered by the deity /Spirit-medium

A temple's deity, such as the Hé Shèng Táng's Leè Hù Sam T'zun-oné, frequently orders the temple troupe to perform the Purification of the Altar, often in sequences of consecutive or alternating days, and frequently in the lead-up to the god's birthday or another occasion. Often the deity commissions other rites (#6) that likewise necessarily include this one.

2. Gods' birthdays, of the troupe's own temple and of certain allied temples (and still others if the troupe is professional or semi-professional)

3. Before moving a god's spirit-image outside the temple precinct for any reason, such as a ritual procession or a pilgrimage to an ancestral temple, or their removal from a temple to be repaired and placement into a Temporary Lodge 行館, and vice versa.

4. In a series leading up to and following a major rite, such as a Jiào or other seasonal rites like the Sending off of the Spirits 送神 at the end of the 12th lunar month.

5. Summoning the deity to descend into a Spirit-possessed palanquin (in the Prefectural City, the Grand Sedan 大駕), and sometimes for a Spirit-medium (in virtually every occasion of spirit-possession in the Pénghú tradition).

6. Before these other rites, which are still practiced by Minor Rite troupes (or a Ritual Master):

Rewarding the Troops 犒賞

Usually performed on the afternoon of a main god's birthday, or after a major ritual event like a Jiào or pilgrimage to the ancestral temple etc.

Summoning the Troops 調營

This rite is probably most often followed by yet another rite listed here, but sometimes is performed in conjunction with other ritual procedures, most notably Requesting Fire 請火 from an Ancestral Temple, the act whereby a temple both renews its sacred incense hearth –the symbolic life-force of the temple-cult– and replenishes the branch-temple's spiritual armies with new spirit-soldiers from the ancestral temple.

Settling the Camps 安營

Sometimes called Patrolling the Camps 巡營, done to install new talismanic bamboo rods in the camps, or ritually renew permanent camps that have metal Spirit-tablets instead of the traditional bamboo staves. Usually performed on or just before a main god's birthday.

Deploying the Troops 放兵 and Withdrawing the Troops 收兵

These rites are normally performed before and after a Jiào; troops are often withdrawn before and then redeployed after the seventh lunar month, so as to allow orphan ghosts to enjoy offerings unmolested. In most versions this rite involves taking the formula used in Summoning the Troops and changing the ritual verb from "summon" 調營 to "deploy" 放 or "withdraw" 收.

Settling a Spirit-altar 安神位

Often performed in people's businesses, factories, and homes. No altar is established in a home or elsewhere without some version of this rite performed by a Ritual Master or Daoist Priest.

Settling [the god's] Seat 安坐.

This is a common rite performed after moving a spirit-image from one place and seating it in another, whether upon a temporary altar, as at a Jiào outer altar, or in a just-opened temple. Some Minor Rite troupes (like the Hé Yì Táng, will change or insert a ritual verb (祖師為吾來安坐...) to specify this "action" of settling in place.

Opening the Light and Dotting the Eyes 開光點眼

The rite of animating a spirit-image. Preceded by the Entry of the Spirit rite, in which a live hornet, symbolic precious objects etc. are placed inside the spirit-image. In the Kāi-guāng 開光 the Ritual Master commands the life of the spirit into the image by dotting its vital points with a brush dipped in the blood of a rooster and breathed upon by members of the altar-community members, and by shining sunlight (sometimes symbolically) with a talismanic mirror into the face of the spirit-image.

Building a Bridge to Cross over Adversity 造橋過限

A community rite often performed on the god's birthday or when specified by the god, and at many temples on Lunar New Year's Day. A bridge consisting (usually) of a long bench is ritually transformed into a Seven Star Bridge 七星橋; individuals cross the bridge and then undergo the Sacrifice to Remove [Adversity] 祭解 procedure to transfer negative spiritual and astral influences to a substitute-body fashioned after the lunar zodiacal animal for the year in which each person was born.

Presenting Cash to Supplement Fortune 進錢補運

The most common healing and fortune-boosting rite in the Táinán area, performed for individuals and temple communities; in Ānpíng performed on the eve before or night of many gods' birthdays. Features the most symbolically shamanistic content in the tradition, with the god (via Spirit-medium or liturgically) ascending into heaven and descending to the underworld to intercede on behalf of individuals and family groups (by the hundreds in temple community rites) by offering sums of spirit-money to different departments of heaven and the underworld.

Sacrifice for Removal [of Adversity] 祭解

This procedure is usually an essential component rites such as Building the Bridge, but may be an independent ritual sequence, always performed for significant numbers of people, and involves the Ritual Master and/or Spirit-medium waving green leafy switches and/or Saint Golden Whip in front and behind a person's upper body while pronouncing a formula (祖師為吾來祭解...) in order to remove their negative influences and transfer them to a substitute body. More involved versions will animate the substitute-body and the formula includes more extensive removals and blessings.

Planting Flowers and Changing the Bushel 栽花換斗

Another semi-shamanic rite in which the RM journeys to the vegetative underworld and revives the plants which represent individuals and their potential offspring. Features the watering and fertilizing of a paper "flower tree" 花叢, represented with its guardians Old-Man Flower 花公 and Old-Lady Flower 花婆.

Smiting the Citadel 打城

The mortuary rite for releasing the soul (or souls) of the deceased from the Citadel of the Unjustly Killed 枉死城, usually performed on recommendation from a Spirit-medium so as to enable a client to neutralize the negative effects diagnosed as emanating from the unhappy soul(s), usually a relative or past-life relation, trapped in the underworld Citadel. A fixed element of more extensive Daoist funeral services. (Nickerson 2007, Lǘ 1992, Lagerwey 1987)

Thanksgiving to the Earth 謝土 (慶土 etc.)

Essentially the Gathering in of Killer-spirits 收煞 or Sacrifice to the Killer-spirits 祭煞, the propitiatory rite *par-excellence* in which the Killer-spirits are invited to the altar-space, feted, and then exorcistically sent off . This rite is, in its core liturgical content, virtually identical to another common rite, the Sacrifice to the [Malevolent] Asterisms 祭星, which is usually performed as a modular unit within an individual client's Presenting Cash rite, or in a Thanksgiving to the Earth performed before opening a new temple. After the Gathering in (or Sacrifice to) the Killer-spirits proper, there usually ensues another dramatic ritual sequence called Suppression of Killer-spirits 押煞 in which the Ritual Master (or Central Reverend) uses the ritual sword to slice the bill of a duck (or chicken, though duck 鴨 is a homophone for 押 "suppress" and is thus preferred) so that it drips blood, and then holding the duck's head and body draws talismans on the temple floor and over every window and spirit-niche with the bleeding bill of the duck so as to prevent the return of the troublesome Killer-spirits.

Opening the Temple Doors 開廟門 The rite to formally open a new or newly renovated temple, usually led by the temple's Spirit-medium or spirit-possessed sedan-chair, and necessarily preceded (the night or up to a fortnight before) by the Thanksgiving to the Earth (i.e. 祭煞) and associated animation of door-gods and other spiritually alive features of the temple by kāi guāng 開光.

Purification by Boiling Oil 煮油 Performed for homes and communities in many locations, before a periodic Jiào or in community precincts in Ānpíng before Sending off the Spirits at the end of the lunar year, and for all kinds of spaces from temples to temporary altars.

Standard Invitation of the Spirits Sequence of Ritual Master Lín Dòuzhī of the Chéngxīn Tán
誠心壇請神咒語之次序

C#
2 開咒 （三界使者）
3 淨咒-啟白 （全部：3.1-3.12）
4 天皇元帥
5 勅吾此劍
6 伏魔將軍（寶劍大將軍）
8 金鞭聖者（獨角騰蛇 大聖者）
9 勅鞭（?）
11 合壇諸猛將
12 龍樹醫王
13 玄天上帝
16 清水祖師
60 徐甲真人
22 本壇大將
24 三壇猛將
25 司命灶君
26 土地公公
27 府縣城隍
28 東嶽大帝
136 黑虎大將
137 王孫三相公

Bǎo-ān Gōng Invitation of the Spirits Sequence
保安宮小法請神 from 閭山堂徐甲真人祝壽 C#

2 開咒 （三界使者）
3 淨咒-啟白 （全部：3.1-3.12）
4 天皇元帥
5 勅吾此劍
6 伏魔將軍
8 金鞭聖者
9 勅鞭
11 合壇諸猛將
12 龍樹醫王
13 玄天上帝
16 清水祖師
22 本壇大將
24 三壇猛將[合壇]「長篇」
25 司命灶君
26 土地公公
36 註生娘媽
27 府縣城隍
28 東嶽大帝
60 徐甲真人
133 列位眾神
136 黑虎大將
137 王孫三相公

Translation and Text of the Standard Héshèng Táng Purification of the Altar/Invitation of the Spirits Ceremony

咒頭

玉虛隨綿遠　　無為香起騰[1]
雷聲天寶化　　助國救生民
正一玄壇將　　雲師度有前
鐵鞭並鐵鎖　　提起鬼神驚
玉皇頒敕令　　官將顯真形
奉請玉皇大法主　化形十方救萬民
左手大把九天器　右手執鞭並雷霆
諸位降下手神允　開鞭一指鬼滅形
奉請九天千眼帝　騰起麒麟下壇來
真身來到化身來　諸位猛虎下壇來
一救凡間無病苦　焚香拜請下壇來
哆囉集福娑婆呵

火急如律令

The Jade Void follows from the distant mystery,[1] Non-action incense rises up.
The sound of thunder [resounds in] heaven of jeweled transformation,
Aid the country and rescue the living people.
Zhèngyī General of the Dark Altar, the Cloud Master crosses over before.[2]
Steel whip and steel lock, taking them up ghosts and gods are stunned.
The Jade Emperor issues authorized command,
Officials and Generals manifest their true forms.
I reverently summon the Jade Emperor, Grand Master of the Rite,
Transform throughout the ten directions and save the common people.
Left hand grandly wielding the instrument[3] of the Nine Heavens,
Right hand holding a whip and the Thunderclap.
I reverently summon the Emperor of the Nine Heavens and a Thousand Eyes,
Rising up on his Qílín, coming down to the altar.
His true form comes, his transformation-body comes, all fierce tigers descend to the altar.
With one entreaty the mortal world is without disease and suffering,
Burn incense, bow and summon, descend to the altar.
Duh-luh assembly of blessing, sa-puh-huh[4]

---

[1] Following CXT:1 reading 玄 for 綿

[2] Several lines up to this point are clearly corrupt; CXT has 雲珠渡有田, the Hé Yì Táng system has 雲師度有情, thus any reading is speculative.

[3] Most versions, following Daoist Canon sources, here have "energy" or "pneuma" 炁 instead of the homophone 器 or "instrument."

[4] This line features the only pseudo-Sanskrit of the entire Taiwanese Minor Rite, and is limited to but four characters. In this we find a major departure from the Ritual Method texts of the Míng Daoist Canon, which is replete with such pseudo-Sanskrit and even the modern Língbǎo liturgy, which still preserves some lines of pseudo-Sanskrit. Such a departure can be characterized as a rejection of meaningless power-words

Urgent as fire, as the Law commands.

合壇
謹請合壇諸猛將　　穢跡金剛龍樹王
北極鎮天真武大將軍　瑜珈五步三界輪
金玉銀枝哪吒菩薩　　奉請關王元帥大將軍
度天殺鬼虎伽儸　　八萬四千大金剛
無千無萬諸猛將　　六丁六甲到壇前
祝門弟子焚香請
普唵祖師合壇官將速降臨
火急如律令

The United Altar
I reverently summon all the fierce generals of the United Altar,
Vajra [who consumes] Impure Traces, and King Dragon-tree.
The Grand General, True Warrior who holds down heaven from the North Pole,
The Yoga Five Paces, Wheel of the Three Realms.
Boddhisattva Núozhà of the Gold, jade and silver branch,
I respectfully summon the Grand General Marshal Guān.
Hou-gei-luh[5] who cross over heaven and kill ghosts, 84-thousand great Vajra-protectors.
Uncountable thousands, uncountable myriad fierce generals, the Six Dǐng and Six Jǐa spirits arrive before the altar.
Disciple of the gate of blessing burn incense and summon,
Ancestral Master Pǔ-Ān, Generals of the United Altar swifly descend
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands.

清水祖師
謹請祖師為吾發毫光　本師為吾發毫光
發起毫光炎炎光　　發起毫光救萬民
顯現毫光祖師來　　符水救民度眾生
弟子壇前專拜請　　清水祖師速降臨
火急如律令

Ancestral Master Clearwater
I reverently summon Ancestral Master Clearwater, on My behalf emit brilliant light,
Root Master, on My behalf emit brilliant light.

---

in favor of comprehensible and meaningful language and images, and as such represents an important editorial direction in the composition of the modern Minor Rite genre: the texts are meant to be meaningful and comprehensible, and arguments found in Nickerson (2007) and elsewhere claiming them to be obscure or difficult to understand are missing the point, a misunderstanding generated by the researcher's reliance on local interpreters and the questioning of ritual clients, who pay no more attention to the liturgical content than does a customer observe the work of a mechanic repairing their motorbike.

[5] A class of Tantric protector-spirits.

Send forth brilliant light, burning burning light,
Send forth brilliant light and save the common people.
Manifest brilliant light, the Ancestral Master comes,
Talisman water saves the common people and delivers the mass of living beings.
Thy disciple before the altar in concentration bows to summon,
Ancestral Master Clearwater swiftly descend,
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands

開台聖王

謹請開台國姓公　英雄猛勇世間無
元是前朝忠良將　帶來兵馬鎮台郡
盡忠報國為第一　名揚四海天下聞
吾有猛勇諸官將　拎妖掠怪顯真靈
威鎮台郡真顯現　扶童顯現助真言
號令一聲邪魔伏　兵符發出鬼神驚
弟子焚香專拜請　開台聖王速降臨
火急如律令

I reverently summon the Lord surnamed "Our Country" Who Opened Táiwān,
Fierce and brave hero, without [equal] in the world.
Originally a loyal general of the previous dynasty, [he] brought soldiers and horses to hold down Táiwān Prefecture.
Serving the country with complete loyalty is [priority] number one,
His name is raised across the four seas and heard under-Heaven.
I have fierce and brave Official Generals,
Seizing fiends and capturing anomalies, manifesting true spiritual power.
Mightily securing Táiwān Prefecture, truly manifesting,
Take possession of the boy [-medium], manifest and assist with true words.
Shout one command and perverse demons submit,
Send out the [spirit-]soldiers' talisman, ghosts and gods are stunned.
Thy disciple before the altar in concentration bows to summon,
The Saintly King who Opened Tái[wān] swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

池府千歲

謹請池府千歲爺　頭載金盔穿龍袍
奉指出巡真顯現　顯現人間救萬民
身授玉皇親勅賜　執掌瘟瘴並疫神
作善作惡吾有知　為賞為罰皆分明
有人焚香來拜請　消災降福永康寧
弟子壇前專拜請　池府千歲速降臨
火急如律

I reverently summon His Highness Lord Deé,
Head wearing a golden helmet,
Wearing a dragon robe.
He received the Jade-emperor's personal
conferment of authorized command,
To manage epidemic diseases and plague spirits.
Doing good and doing evil, I have knowledge,
Offering reward and punishment, all are clearly distinguished.
If someone burns incense and comes to worship and appeal,
[Then I (the god) will] Eliminate disasters, send down blessings, forever well and tranquil.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
His Highness Lord Deé swifly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

玄天上帝

謹請玄天上帝爺　　北極壬癸水明旗
敕奉真君號真武　　威鎮北極展真行
披頭散髮騰空起　　黑旗展起鬼神驚
左手寶劍斬妖精　　右手勅旨救萬民
左有英勇康元帥　　友有忠良趙玄壇
蒼龜赤蛇朝真武　　六丁六甲左右隨
吾法北方壬癸水　　押去南方火精神
弟子壇前專拜請　　玄天上帝速降臨
火急如律令

Ħen-Teń Šhiong-deǐ/Xuán Tiān Shàng Dì
(Supreme Lord of Dark Heaven)
I reverently summon the Supreme Lord of Dark Heaven,
Bright Ren-guǐ water flag of the celestial North Pole,
Honored with authorized command as the Real Lord, and called the Real Warrior,
Mightily guarding the North Pole, manifesting real action.
Hair loosened around his head, rising into the sky,
The Black Flag unfurls, ghosts and gods are stunned.
Left hand holding a jeweled sword beheading fiendish spirits,
Right hand holding a decree of authorized command, saving the common people.
On the left is the brave hero Marshal Kāng,
On the right is the Good and Loyal Marshal Zhào.
The Celestial Tortoise and the Red Serpent face the Real Warrior,
The Six Dīng and Six Jiǎ spirits follow on the left and right.
My ritual method is the Rén-guǐ water of the north,
Seize and send [them] to the fire-spirit of the south.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Supreme Lord of Dark Heaven swiftly decend!

Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

保生大帝

仰啓輔天吳真人　　五方捉縛虎伽儸
東方木德虎伽儸　　南方火德虎威儸
西方金德威能行　　北方黑德虎馬儸
中方聖者軍靈行　　威風凜凜不思議
捉縛枷鎖四大將　　總押水消大神王
維王登策不可問　　正力尊權難可得
或在天中神歸依　　或在波浪斬蛟龍
或在金輪養精神　　或在世間救萬民
不問諸神為何鬼　　不問十惡狐狸精
不問山神無道鬼　　不問宣威受勅神
若有不正為何鬼　　押去壇前化作塵
弟子壇前專拜請　　保生大帝速降臨
火急如律令

I reverently summon[6] the Supporter of Heaven, the Realized Man Wú [Gñoú],
The Hou-ḡei-luḱ spirits of the five directions who seize and bind:
Hou-ḡei-luḱ of the East and the power of Wood,
Ĥou-w̄ee-luḱ of the South and the power of Fire.
Ŵee-ling-hinńǵ of the West and the power of Metal
Ĥou-m̂a-luḱ of the North and the Power of Black.
The Holy General of Numinous Action of the Center,[7]
A mighty wind, fierce and frightening, unimaginable.
The Four Great Generals Seize, Fetters, Cangue, Lock,
Arrest all and [send them to] the Great Spirit-King of Water that [makes things] disappear.
The Medicine King fixes the gavel-ruler, unquestionable,[8]
Righteous power and reverend authority, difficult to obtain.
Perhaps in the midst of Heaven, taking refuge [in the teaching],
Perhaps amid the waves slaying the fell-dragon.
Perhaps in the Golden Wheel nourishing his spiritual essence,
Perhaps in the mortal world saving the common people.
No matter [faced with] what gods or what kind of ghosts,
No matter [if it's] the Fox-spirit of ten evils,
No matter [if it's] a Mountain Spirit or ghost "without the Dào",
No matter [if it's] a god who claims to have received authorized command.
If there be any unrighteous ghosts of any kind,

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[6] Note appearance of "仰啓" rather than 謹請; the meaning is essentially the same, and, like 謹請 is frequently used in Daoist invocations。

[7] CXT has the Third Prince Lǐ aka the Prime Marshal of the Central Altar here 中央哪吒三太子.

[8] Here following CXT 22 and other sources (XLA 4) that have 醫王定尺 for the problematic 維王登策.

Seize and send them before the altar, and render them unto dust.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
The Grand Emperor who Protects Life swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

哪吒太子

謹請哪吒三太子　　太子七歲展神通
哪吒太子哪吒能　　哪吒太子百萬兵
百萬兵馬排兵走　　走馬排兵到壇前
手執金圈身允允　　腳踏毫光五彩雲
吾是師父傳法界　　化坐蓮花水上生
水進之時騰水性　　水退之時近水行
一日狂風便吹起　　直到金鑾玉殿前
釋迦臨水無龍子　　便是童哪勅骨生
一為上帝天皇力　　二為殺鬼玉皇兵
三為三佛諸滿地　　總押水消大神王
若有不準吾放出　　押去眾鬼水茫茫
休吾騰雲吾放出　　不吾騰雲吾不休
北極殿前呼散奈　　師父出相度凡人
弟子壇前專拜請　　哪吒太子速降臨
火急如律令

I reverently summon Ɬuh-chiâ the Third Prince,
When seven years old, the Prince displayed his spiritual power.
Prince Ɬuh-chiâ, Ɬuh-chiâ is capable,[9]
Prince Ɬuh-chiâ [has] one million soldiers.
One million soldiers and horses, formed in ranks they run,
Running horses, ranked soldiers, arrive before the altar.
Hand holding a golden hoop, his body effulgent,[10]
Feet treading upon a brilliant light and a cloud of five colors.
I am the ritual realm transmitted by the Master,
Transform to sit on a lotus flower, born upon the water.
When the water advances I stride upon the water,[11]
When the water retreats I follow the water in stride.
One day a wild wind began to blow,
Straight to the Golden Imperial Palace of the Jade Emperor.
Shakya[-muni Buddha] facing the water, no dragon-son,
And so the boy Ɬuh[-chiâ] was born from a bone by authorized command.

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[9] CXT 67 has the Mínnán homophone "Ɬuh-Chiâ has command" 哪吒令
[10] 身允允 unclear, other versions lack this line.
[11] Reading 行 for 性, tentative redaction; other versions (CXT 68) have "when the water advances I hear the sound of the water" 水來之時聽水聲， with several homophones.

First is the Imperial power of the Emperor on High,
Second is the Jade Emperor's soldiers who slay ghosts,
Third is the Three Buddhas all filling the earth,[12]
Arrest all and [send them to] the Great Spirit-King of Water that [makes things] disappear.
If there are those whom I do not allow [but who still] venture out,[13]
Seize and send them all to the mass of ghosts in the watery abyss.[14]
Wait for me to rise up in a cloud, [then] I send forth [troops],
I do not rise up on a cloud, I do not rest.[15]
Before the Palace of the North Pole, arhats within,[16]
The Master appears and saves the common people.[17]
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Prince Luh-chiâ swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

劉府尊王

謹請劉府大尊王　　神通廣大法無邊
頭載金盔毫光現　　黃府尊王助真言
本是當年三兄弟　　降落人間度眾生
左手寶劍請神將　　右手靈符保平安
吾是玉皇親勅賜　　降落凡間分善惡
善惡分明皆有應　　賞善罰惡不留停
弟子壇前專拜請　　劉府尊王速降臨
火急如律令

I reverently summon Sire Laú, Great Reverend King,
Spiritual power spreading broadly, ritual power without limit.
Head wearing a golden helmet, brilliant light manifesting,
Reverend King Hńg assisting with true speech.
Originally [they] were three brothers for that year's [imperial exam],
Descended into the mortal realm to save all living beings.
Left hand holding a jeweled sword summoning spirit-generals,
Right hand holding a spiritual talisman to protect peace-and-safety.
I have personally received the Jade Emperor's authorized command,
[to] Descend into the mortal realm to separate good and evil.

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[12] CXT 68 has "Third is the Three Buddhas, Holy Emperor Guān" 三為三佛關聖帝.
[13] This is addressed to the ghostly spirit-soldiers under the Ritual Master's command.
[14] This too appears to reference the idea that spirit-soldiers are drawn from the unworshipped ghosts who dwell in the dark (yīn) ocean and river depths.
[15] Line difficult, other versions offer no clear resolution, though XLA has "do not release the living soul, I do not rest."不放生魂吾不休.
[16] Here following CXT 68 北極殿前羅漢內， HST 北極殿前呼散奈 last three characters corrupt.
[17] CXT 68 has the partial homophone "Writing talismans, invocation-water, saving the common people." 靈符咒水救萬民.

Good and evil clearly separated, all have their recompense,
Reward the good and punish the evil without ceasing.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Reverend King Sire Laú swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

黃府尊王
謹請黃府二尊王　　真身顯現來扶童
頭戴金盔穿龍袍　　名揚四海天下揚
吾是玉皇親勅賜　　敕封代天巡狩者
左手寶劍斬邪魔　　右手靈符度眾生
六丁六甲六神將　　百萬天兵助吾行
人有災難催咒請　　焚香拜請到壇前
弟子壇前專拜請　　黃府尊王速降臨
火急如律令

I reverently summon Sire Hńg, Second Reverend King,
True form manifest, come and take possession of the boy.
Head wearing a golden helmet, wearing a dragon-robe,
His name is raised throughout the four seas and all-under-Heaven.
I have personally received the Jade Emperor's authorized command,
Authorized and invested to patrol on behalf of Heaven.
Left hand holding a jeweled sword slaying perverse demons,
Right hand holding a spiritual talisman saving the mass of living beings.
Six Dinnĝ [spirits], Six Gaĥ [spirits] , six spirit-generals,
One million celestial soldiers assist [me] as I go.
If people meet with disaster or difficulty, then [let them] urge with invocations and summon,
Burn incense and bow to summon down before the altar.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Reverend King Sire Hńg swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

李府尊王
謹請李府三尊王　　真身顯現鬼神驚
頭載金盔穿龍袍　　腳踏雙獅遊世界
身授玉皇親勅賜　　敕封雲遊遍天下
左手寶劍斬妖精　　右手敕旨救萬民
驅邪治病為第一　　收除押煞顯威靈
若有男女有災禍　　焚香拜請到壇前
弟子壇前專拜請　　李府尊王速降臨
火急如律令

I reverently summon Sire Leè, Third Reverend King.
[His] true form manifests, ghosts and gods are stunned.

Head wearing a golden helmet, wearing a dragon-robe,
Feet treading upon a pair of lions, he roams the world.
[He] personally received the Jade Emperor's authorized command,
Authorized and invested to roam in the clouds throughout all-under-Heaven.
Left hand holding a jeweled sword slaying fiendish spirits,
Right hand with authorized command to save the common people.
Driving out perverse [spirits] and healing disease are priority number one,
Eliminating and suppressing Killer-spirits, manifesting awesome spiritual power.
If there be men or women who meet with disaster or misfortune,
[Let them] burn incense, bow and summon before the altar.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Reverend King Sire Leè swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

張公大法主

謹請張公大法主　　真身顯現鬼神驚
披頭散髮騰空起　　腳踏火輪飛萬里
靈符展起邪魔走　　降在地下渡眾生
拎妖掠怪為第一　　驅邪治病展真靈
左手寶劍斬妖精　　右手敕旨救萬民
若有男女有災禍　　焚香拜請到壇前
唸吾神咒隨顯現　　扶童顯現助真言
敕封天上大法主　　下降壇前展威靈
吾法北方壬癸水　　押去南方火精神
弟子壇前專拜請　　張公法主速降臨
火急如律令

I reverently summon Sire Diõh, Great Lord-of-the-Rite,
[His] true form manifests, ghosts and gods are terrified.
Loosened hair streaming around his head, rising up in the sky,
Feet treading on a Wheel of Fire, flying ten-thousand leagues.
Seizing fiendish [spirits] and overpowering anomalies is priority number one,
Driving out perverse [sprits], healing disease, displaying true spiritual power.
Left hand holding a jeweled sword beheading fiendish spirits,
Right hand holding a decree of authorized command to save the common people.
If there are men or women who have disaster or misfortune,
[Let them] burn incense, bow and summon before the altar.
Recite my divine invocation and [I] immediately manifest,
Take possession of the boy, manifest and assist with true words.
Authorized and invested as the Celestial Grand Lord-of-the-Rite,
Descend before the altar and display mighty spiritual power.
My ritual method is the rén-guǐ water of the north,
Seize and send [them] to the fire-spirit of the south.

Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Sire Diōh̆ Lord-of-the-Rite swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

福德正神

謹請本境土地公　　鎮守境內顯神通
明山大州諸聖將　　庇祐人家永康寧
善事祈求皆有應　　招財進寶有餘慶
過去未來皆注定　　吉凶禍福隨人行
遊行天下都變化　　靈符咒水救萬民
善男信女皆恭敬　　焚香拜請到壇前
弟子壇前專拜請　　福德正神速降臨

火急如律令

I reverently summon Sire Earth God of this precinct,
Holding down and guarding [all] within the precinct, manifesting spiritual power.
All the holy generals of the bright mountain and great prefecture,
Blessing and protecting people's families that they may be forever healthy and at peace.
Prayers for good matters all have [miraculous] response,
Beckoning wealth and bringing in treasure, there is extra for celebration.
The past and future are all preordained,
Favorable and baleful, disaster and blessing follow people as they go.
Roaming under heaven, all is transformed,
Numinous talismans, invocation-water to save the common people.
Good men and faithful women all pay their respects,
Burn incense, bow and summon before the altar.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Righteous Spirit of Blessed Virtue swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

玄壇元帥

謹請龍虎玄壇將　　金輪元帥大將軍
腳踏七星五雷將　　五雷兵馬雲中行
手執鐵鞭降魔鬼　　手執鐵鎖縛妖精
虎到壇前真顯現　　邪魔惡鬼盡皆驚
吾是天師降行法　　百萬天兵助吾行
弟子壇前專拜請　　玄壇元帥速降臨

火急如律令

I reverently summon the Dragon-tiger [Mountain] General of the Dark Altar,
Grand General, Prime Marshal of the Golden Wheel.
Feet treading on the Seven Stars, General of the Five Thunders,

Five Thunders Soldiers and Horses move within a cloud.
[In one] hand holding an iron whip, subduing demonic ghosts,
[The other] hand holding an iron lock, binding up fiendish spirits.
[His] tiger arrives before the altar, truly manifesting,
Perverse demons and evil ghosts every last one is thunderstruck.
I am the Celestial Master, descended to practice Ritual Method.
One million celestial soldiers assist me as I go.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bow to summon,
Prime Marshal of the Dark Altar swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

黑虎將軍

謹請龍虎山黑虎將 金輪元帥大將軍
上山黑黑山上　　上山驅猛虎
下水斬蛟龍　　天上步七星
地下應我令　　日月同我照
鬼神見我驚　　我是天師法
救助諸眾生　　弟子中壇請
黑虎速降臨　　火急如律令

I reverently summon General Black Tiger of Dragon-Tiger Mountain,
Prime Marshal of the Golden Wheel, Grand General.
Go up the mountain black, black mountain go up
Go up the mountain and drive out the fierce tiger,
Go down to the water and slay the fell-dragon,
In heaven above pace the Seven Stars,
In the earth below, respond to my command.[18]
The Sun and Moon together shine upon me,
Ghosts and gods see me and are thunderstruck.
I am the Celestial Master's Ritual Method,
Saving and assisting all the throng of living beings.
Thy disciple from the central altar summons,
Black Tiger swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

1:23 王孫三相公

謹請王孫三相公　　騎龍走馬展神通
身授玉皇上帝敕　　降在人間攝生童
下陰收魂來作法　　入地作法鬼神驚
吾有猛勇諸官將　　驅邪斬鬼滅妖精
弟子壇前專拜請　　王孫元帥速降臨

[18] Reading 令 linnḡ for 能 linnǵ.

火急如律令

I reverently summon the Third Minister Ōng-Suî,
Riding a dragon [with] running horses, displaying spiritual power.
[He] personally received authorized command from the Jade Sovereign Emperor-on-High,
[To] descend into the human world and take possession of the 'raw' youth.
Descend into the Yīn [underworld], gather in the soul and perform ritual,
Enter the underworld, perform ritual, ghosts and gods are stunned.
[chanted in one-beat syllables:]
I have all [my] fierce and brave Officials and Generals,
Drive out perverse [spirits], slay ghosts and exterminate fiendish spirits.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Prime Marshal Ōng-Suî swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

[End of invocation of male deities. An intermission-break follows here (@20 min.) before beginning the invocation of goddesses.]

The Goddesses 女神

When the Central Reverend decides that it's time to resume the ritual, he may indicate as much to the drum-leader, who will call people to "go to work"上班, or will often tap three beats on a drum to signal that break-time is over. Often, though, a spontaneous consensus simply moves troupe members to take up their drums and stand in places. At some point in the swift transition out of break-mode, a bundle of incense is lit for the next round of summons. After everyone has taken their places, the Central Reverend gives a nod to the drum-leader, who cracks a beat on the wooden spine of the ritual drum, and with this "crack" sound, the ritual resumes and the rhythm is established in a measure of beats. To indicate continuity with the previous invitation of spirits, the first syllables sung are "spirit-soldiers..." 神兵, which represents the closing line of the last invocation of the male gods, thus formally linking the already concluded invocation of the gale gods with the next phase of summoning the goddesses as if there was no break or pause in between. Altars in Ānpíng do not take a break between the male gods and goddesses, but pivot at the very end of the dramatic, five-character Black Tiger 黑虎 invocation into the slower cadence and different melody of the goddesses. It seems that taking a break was likely a later development, and the idea remained that there should be continuity from the last of the male gods and the beginning of the goddesses, and so thus the singing resumes, with the added empty-syllables proper to the Guān-Yīn invocation melody, "sprit-soldiers...I reverently summon..." Thus the concrete details structuring ritual practice always reveal a precise sensitivity to considerations of ritual time, its punctuation, continuity and context relative to the formal initiation and cessation of ritual time at the beginning and end of the ceremony.

There are at least two and sometimes three different melodies 調 (diaū) used to invoke the goddesses: the first is the Guān-Yīn melody, which sometimes is extended to the first three invocations (to Madame Línshuǐ), then the Goddess melody proper, and finally from time to time the penultimate invocation of the Fifth Watch [of the Dawn] is sung in the so-called Nán-guǎn 南

管 (lam guaǹ) melody, that features a different rhythmic and syllabic structure, and which makes for a dramatic intensification of the musical mood before the invocation ceremony concludes with Prime Marshal Ǹuh-chiâ 哪吒元帥，with a corresponding shift back to the Male-god melody. This is typical of Black-Head altars from Táinán to Ānpíng where Prime Marshal Ǹuh-chiâ forms the rearguard protecting the procession of gods depicted in the invocation ceremony.[19]

Except for this final shift of melody, which just pivots on the change of cadence, the other shifts of melody (from Guān-Yin to Goddess melody, and thence into the Nán-guǎn melody (if so chosen), these are first signaled by a single crack on the rest of an off-beat during the penultimate or final line of the preceding invocation. Furthermore, all the different Goddess melodies divide lines between upper and lower chorus by splitting each seven-character couplet into the first four and final three characters; the upper chorus sings the first four and the lower chorus sings the last three, with these divisions made natural by the cadence and addition of empty-syllables proper to these melodies of the Goddess invocations.

There are likewise some minor lexical distinctions to be noted in the invocations for the Goddesses. First they all end with "personally descend" 親降臨 instead of "swiftly descend" 速降臨, which informants have explained as reflecting a more polite mode of address. Then the final line, in the text and recitation all has "Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire..." which is to say, in the invocations for male gods, the "spirit-soldiers" is understood and elided. This small detail becomes evident when the ritual resumes by beginning with what was and understood and elided "Spirit soldiers..." constructed as though it had concluded the invocation of Ōng-Suǹ.

觀音佛祖

謹請觀音大菩薩　頭戴玉雲彌陀冠
身穿珠衣滿面綉　腳踏鳳鞋來世間
上才提來符水鉢　良女執來楊柳枝
楊柳運水潑世間　家家戶戶保平安
男女焚香來拜請　觀音佛祖入家來
信女三九就食菜　清心誦唸佛祖經
家家誦唸阿彌陀　處處誦唸觀世音
世間弟子來起廟　敬請佛祖入廟來
佛祖隨時來坐殿　上才良女隨兩邊
眾神招請來賀拜　佛祖賜伊照頭排
佛前韋陀豎正中　十八羅漢排兩邊
前殿彌力鎮在此　四大金剛把頭門
金剛手執琴傘劍　看見世間妖精現
收來妖精用腳踏　妖精啼叫如雷聲

[19] In Ōng-Ginnĝ 王宮(i.e. Xújiǎ 徐甲) altars it is always Prime Marshal Ōng-Suǹ who takes this final rearguard position. In this Black-Head altar, Ōng-Suǹ is likewise fixed as the final invocation of the male gods, and likewise whenever performing some longer or more open-ended rite of any kind the entire ceremony is always brought to an end this way, with Master Ā-T'zuee-saî calling "Ōng-Suǹ" to declare it is time to conclude. Hence while Black-Head altars all share this position of invoking Prime Marshal Ǹuh-Chiâ

世間弟子來看見　　看見佛祖正神來
隨時香燭來求拜　　佛祖庇佑萬民安
弟子壇前專拜請　　觀音佛祖親降臨
神兵火急如律令

I reverently summon the Great Bodhisatta Guān-Yīn,
Head wearing a Jade-cloud Amithabha-crown,
[Her] body wearing a pearl robe, [her] whole face embroidered [silk],
Virtuous Talent[20] comes with the bowl of talisman-water,
Good Girl comes holding a willow-branch,
The willow-branch carries the [talisman-]water and casts it into the world.
[So that] every family and household [may] preserve peace and safety.
Men and women burn incense and come to worship and summon [in their homes],
Buddha-Ancestor Guān-Yīn comes and enters into their home.
Faithful women, on the threes and nines [of the calendar] go eat vegetarian,
[And] with a pure heart recite the Buddha-Ancestor Scripture.
Every family recites "Ā-mīee-duḥ"
Everywhere [people] recite "Ḡuan-ēei-yeeṃ̂"
In the human world, disciples come [together] and build a temple,
[And] respectfully summon the Buddha-Ancestor to enter into [their] temple.
From time to time the Buddha-Ancestor comes to sit in the [temple-] hall,
Virtuous Talent and Good Girl attend her on each side.
All the gods are summoned together to come celebrate and bow,
The Buddha-Ancestor bestows illumination upon their heads.[21]
Wee-duḥ [the Dharma-protector] stands before the Buddha in the exact center.
The 18 Arhats ranked on both sides.
In the front hall, Maitreya secures this place,
The Four Great Vajra [Heavenly Kings] bar the front gate.
Vajra[-protector(s)] holding a zither, a parasol, and a sword,
Look and see, in the human world fiendish spirits appear.
[They] seize the fiendish spirits, [and] use their feet to stomp [them],
Fiendish spirits weep and wail like the sound of thunder.
Disciples in the world come and see,
See the Buddha-Ancestor, Righteous Spirit arrive.
From time to time, [with] incense and candles come beseech and worship,
Buddha-Ancestor [offers] blessing and protection, the common people are at peace.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,

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[20] Reading 善才 for 上才, which this invocation consistently has, despite the fact they are not homophonous (善 sēn, 上 shiong̍), Virtuous Talent and Good Girl 善才良女 being Guān-Yīn's two servant/subordinates, and who appear in most of Guān-Yīn's iconographic depictions and Minor Rite invocations, e.g. CXT 3.12 and CXT 34, which all have the correct characters 善才 but which are not cognate with this HST Black-Head invocation.

[21] Line likely corrupt.

Guān-Yīn Buddha-Ancestor personally descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

天上聖母

謹請天上娘聖母　頭戴龍鳳紫金冠
身穿麒麟獅子衣　腳踏鳳鞋水上走
水上變化左右兵　當天發愿渡弟子
全渡世間善男女　協力三寶去和番
得騰回朝有功名　皇帝敕賜謝娘恩
必坐世間顯湄洲　湄洲山上真仙境
四處崑崙真正多　崑崙山上白波波
上無山家斷火煙　下有江海水川流
千次多求萬次應　萬家所請萬家靈
弟子壇前專拜請　湄洲聖母親降臨
神兵火急如律令

I reverently summon the Holy Mother of Heaven,
Head wearing a purple-gold dragon-phoenix crown.
Body wearing a qílín-lion robe,
Feet treading upon phoenix-shoes, she strides upon the water.
On the water [she] transforms, to the left and right are soldiers,
On that day she vowed to deliver [her] disciples,
To completely deliver [all] the virtuous men and women in the world,
Joining the strength of the three jewels, go and pacify the barbarians.
Returning in victory to the Imperial Court, with renown for merit,
The emperor bestowed authorized command to give thanks for the Mother's grace.
She must sit within the world and manifest [at] Méizhōu,
Upon the mountain of Méizhōu, true realm of the immortals.
On the four quarters, Mount Kūn-lún, many indeed,
On Mount Kūn-lún, [peaks like] white wave [upon] wave.
Up on the mountain, [in] a home cutting off fire and smoke,[22]
Down there are rivers and seas, water and streams flowing.
A thousand times or more [people] beseech [her], ten thousand times there is a response.
That which ten-thousand families request, in ten thousand families there is a resoponse.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Holy Mother of Méizhōu personally descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

臨水夫人

謹請福州莆田縣　臨水三宮奶奶娘

[22] This image is meant to convey the taking up of a life of austerities, without cooking or heat. The text here has a problematic 無 or "nothing" that is likely corrupt; other versions lack this line.

奶奶年登十八歲　　金吾捨身入瑜珈
三帝將軍隨娘法　　五帝將軍隨娘行
或在雲中騎戰馬　　或在水中統雄兵
統領雄兵三十萬　　海口將軍隨娘行
有心請媽媽也知　　無心請媽媽也來
高山峻嶺也著過　　高山險嶺也著行
行到莆田入廟內　　焚香拜請保平安
弟子壇前專拜請　　臨水夫人親降臨
神兵火急如律令

I reverently summon [native of] H̋ok-jiêw, P̂ou-Sań County,[23]
Three Palace Matron Ladies of Línshuǐ.[24]
When the Matron grew to eighteen years of age,
As a youth she renounced her [secular] life and entered [study of] Yoga.[25]
General Third-Emperor follows the Lady in ritual,
General Fifth-Emperor follows the Lady as she goes.
Perhaps in a cloud riding a warhorse,
Perhaps in the water commanding heroic soldiers.[26]
Commanding heroic soldiers, three-hundred thousand [troops],
General of the Estuary follows the Lady as she goes.
[If someone] has a mind to summon the Mother, the Mother will know,[27]
With no mind to summon the Mother, the Mother still comes.
High mountain and imposing peaks, still able to pass,
High mountain and perilous peaks, still able to go.
Go down to P̂ou-sań enter into the temple,
Burn incense, bow and summon, preserve peace and safety.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Madame Línshuǐ personally descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

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[23] Virtually all Táinán-area Minor Rite invocations （e.g. CXT 30) share this incorrect association with Pou-sań 莆田 Pǔ-tián County, instead of the correct Ĝou-sań 古田 Gǔ-tián County. Whether this is simple confusion prompted by near-homophones, and encouraged by the relative proximity of Pǔ-tián County to Mínnán-speaking areas, or whether a major cultic center in Pǔ-tián County influenced this identification in the text. Again this points to the low influence of mythic narrative on the Minor Rite invocations, as such narrative sources are unlikely to get this important detail wrong.

[24] While the text has 臨水三宮奶奶娘, I take the "three" to indicate the "three

[25] The HST line 金吾捨身入瑜珈 appears corrupt, with the "金吾" –evidently a subordinate general (金吳？) mentioned in some other invocations transposed to the head of this line. I have followed the more logical CXT 30 少年捨身入瑜伽.

[26] This appears to be in reference to spirit-soldiers being recruited from water-dwelling ghosts.

[27] In all Táinán-area Black-Head altars, when using the "Guān-Yīn" melody at the HST and other altars' goddess-melody, this line is sung in the same distinct way, with the melodic line shifting to emphasize "the Mother will know."

陳氏夫人

行罡作法陳夫人　　統領天兵百萬人
百花男女橋頭分　　鼓樂吹來臨水宮
甲寅元月正月半　　亥時養育外媽親
父是陳家陳長者　　母是西凉蔡夫人
南海觀音來渡法　　老君渡法救萬民
弟子壇前專拜請　　陳氏夫人親降臨
神兵火急如律令

Pacing the mainstay, performing ritual, Madame Chén,
Commanding a million Celestial soldiers.
Hundred-flowers boys and girls divide at the bridge-head,[28]
Drums and music come blowing at the Línshuǐ Temple.
[In the] Jiǎ-yǐn year, halfway [through] the first lunar month,
Born [at the] hǎi-hour and reared by her maternal grandmother.
[Her] father is the elder Danī of the Danī family,
[Her] mother is the Western Palace Madame Tsuà.[29]
Guān-Yīn of the Southern Sea comes to [offer] salvation-by-ritual,
Lǎo-Jūn's salvation-by-ritual rescues the common people.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Madame Danī [Chén] personally descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the law commands!

蔡氏夫人

北方南朝真顯應　　敕封恩主蔡夫人
夫人三十去學法　　統領天兵百萬人
東方將軍楊相公　　南方靈符張使者
西方將軍何文貴　　北方將軍陳桂先
中央將軍黃有明　　聞吾召請到壇前
弟子壇前專拜請　　蔡氏夫人親降臨
神兵火急如律令

Northern quarter, southern-facing, truly manifesting response,
Authorized and invested as Lord-of-Mercy Madame Tsuà.
[When] thirty years old Madame went to learn ritual method,
Commanding a million celestial soldiers.

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[28] CXT 29 has the preferable 白花轎頭度男女 "[At the] White-flower bridge-head, men and women cross over". This image is in reference to the ritual bridge or Seven-star Bridge which forms an important rite in the Ritual Master repertoire..

[29] Again this identification of Madame Línshuǐ's mother with this goddess Madame Tsuà 蔡夫人 is unique to Black-Head invocations (CXT 29 has 萬夫人). This Madame Tsuà, who is also invoked separately, appears to be the Liúqiú goddess of the same name worshipped in the Fúzhōu area.

General of the Eastern quarter Minister Yioń [Yáng],
Numinous talisman of the Southern quarter, Emissary Diōn̄.
General of the Western quarter, Huṅ Bun-gueĕ,
General of the Northern quarter, Dāñ Guee-seṅ̂.
General of the Center, Hńg Ŷiew-ḅinńg
Hear my summons [and] arrive before the altar.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Madame Tsuà personally descend!
Spirit-solders, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

七星玄女

謹請七星玄女娘　　真身顯現來扶童
頭上金冠蓋紫雲　　腳下弓鞋三寸長
吾是上界織女星　　降落凡間救女人
身授玉皇親敕賜　　敕封九天玄女神
雖見世間多疾病　　急召六者助真言
或在雲中騎青鸞　　或在凡間救生產
右手葫蘆驅邪魔　　左手符鉢產眾生
有人焚香來求愿　　真身下降在壇前
弟子壇前專拜請　　七星玄女親降臨
神兵火急如律令

I reverently summon the Mysterious Woman of the Seven Stars,
True form manifest, come and take possession of the boy.
On [her] head a golden crown covered with a purple cloud,
Beneath her feet, bow-shoes three inches long.
I am the Weaving-girl Star of the High Realm,
Descended into the mortal world to rescue women.
[She] personally received the Jade Emperor's authorized command,
Authorized and invested as the goddess Mysterious Woman of the Nine Heavens.[30]
Seeing so much epidemic disease in the human world,
Urgently summon the Six [spirits] to assist with true words.
Perhaps in the midst of a cloud riding a green phoenix,
Perhaps in the mortal world saving [those] giving birth.
Right hand holding a gourd to expel perverse demons,
Left hand holding a bowl of talisman[-water for the] birth of all living beings.
If people burn incense and come with entreaties and vows,
[Then] the true body descends before the altar.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,

[30] This designation of the Goddess of the Seven Stars 七星娘娘 as the Mysterious Woman of the Seven Stars, a possible conflation with the Mysterious Woman of the Nine Heavens 九天玄女, is also made in CXT 35 七星娘媽, though the two invocations are otherwise unrelated.

Mysterious Woman of the Seven Stars personally descend!
Spirit-solders, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

註生娘媽

謹請註生娘媽娘　手執玉筆定男女
吾是玉皇親敕賜　降落凡間救女人
頭上金冠蓋紫雲　廿四婆者左右隨
原是上界天仙女　威鎮宮內顯真靈
雖見世間多生育　立在血湖救產生
人有敬心來救愿　降福降祥賜兒孫
日夜養育是姐母　抱男攜女在身邊
災禍祈求皆有應　萬事皆化保平安
弟子壇前專拜請　註生娘媽親降臨

神兵火急如律令

I reverently summon the Lady Who Records Birth,
Hand holding a jade brush, deciding male and female.
I have been personally granted authorized command by the Jade Emperor,
[To] descend into the mortal world to rescue women.
On [her] head [she] wears a golden crown covered over with a purple cloud,
The Twenty-four Matrons follow on the left and right.
Originally [she] was a celestial immortal lady of the Upper Realm,
Mightily securing the interior of the temple, manifesting true spiritual power.
Seeing so much childbearing in the world,
Standing in the Lake of Blood to rescue childbirth.
[If] people come with a respectful heart with vows [seeking] rescue,
[Then I will] send down blessings, send down fortune and bestow sons and grandchildren.
Day and night, Elder-sister and Mother are rearing and nurturing,
Embracing a boy and bringing a girl beside her.
Disaster and misfortune [strike], prayers and entreaties all have response,
Ten-thousand affairs all transform, preserve peace and safety.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Lady-Mother Who Records Birth personally descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the law commands!

勤氏仙姑

天乙女醫勤少娘　夜判陰間日判陽
頭上金髮戴冠紫　手執葫蘆照陽間
腳踏七星身佩劍　真身顯現來扶童
六丁六甲六神將　三十六將隨吾行
二十八宿助吾行　顯現毫光在壇前
吾是上界天仙女　發誓私愿救女人
瘡癰產難救諸苦　唸吾符咒現真形
弟子壇前專拜請　勤氏仙姑親降臨

神兵火急如律令

Heaven's "second" female physician, Maiden Keeń,
By night judging the Dark [spirit-]world, by day judging the Bright [human realm].
Upon [her] head, with golden hair she wears a crown of purple,
Hand holding a gourd to illuminate the Bright [human] world.
Feet treading [upon the] Seven Stars, [her] body girded with a sword,
[Her] true form manifests, come and take possession of the boy.
Six Dinnĝ, Six Gaȟ, six spirit-generals,
The Thirty-six Generals follow as I go.
The twenty-eight lunar mansions assist as I go,
Manifest brilliant before the altar.
I am a celestial immortal lady of the Upper Realm,
[I] swore an oath, my personal wish to rescue women.
Gangrenous ulcers and difficult childbirth, [I] rescue from all suffering,
Recite my talisman-invocation, [and I] manifest [my] true form.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bowing to summon,
Immortal Lady Keeń personally descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

何氏仙姑

上界女醫何仙姑　　上天差來鎮廟門
頭上金冠及花界　　腳踏七星三界輪
左手執劍斬妖精　　右手符水救女人
吾喝一聲雷公响　　吾喝一聲入地輪
破界三途九州岳　　立在血湖救產難
破穢救產吾在上　　解厄救難吾在前
救盡眾生陰陽德　　急召六者即現身
弟子壇前專拜請　　何氏仙姑親降臨
神兵火急如律令

Female doctor of the Upper Realm, Immortal Lady Huȟ,
[From] heaven above dispatched to come and secure the temple door.
On [her] head wearing a golden crown and a cap of flowers,[31]
[Her] feet stepping on the Seven Stars and the Wheel of the Three Realms.
Left hand holding a sword, slaying fiendish spirits,
Right hand [holding] talisman-water to rescue women.
I shout one sound, Sire Thunder resounds,
I shout one sound [and] enter the earth-wheel.
[I] destroy the [chthonic] realms of the three roads and the mountains of the Nine Prefectures,
[I] stand in the Lake of Blood and save women.
Destroying filth, rescuing childbirth, I am above,

[31] Following CXT 42 reading 蓋 for the Mínnan homophone 界 (both pronounced gaǐ)

Removing adversity, rescuing from difficulty, I am in front.
Rescuing completely all the multitude of living beings, power of Yīn and Yáng,
Urgently summon the Six [spirits] and immediately manifest bodily [form].
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Immortal Lady Huǹ personally descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

李氏仙女

上界女醫李少娘　　神通變化法無邊
原是人間女子身　　功成行滿步真身
雖見世間多疾病　　扶降乩童助真言
慈濟真君傳祕法　　惡邪惡鬼化塵煙
宮有三十六員將　　惡邪惡鬼盡皆驚
全治瘡癰產難婦　　消災降福現女仙
有事專心催咒請　　來時雲霧真現身
弟子壇前專拜請　　李氏仙女親降臨
神兵火急如律令

Female doctor of the Upper Realm, Maiden Leè,
Spiritual power transforming, ritual power without end.
Originally [she] was a girl of the human world,
Merit cultivated to fullness, [she] paces [with a] true body.
Seeing the mortal world with so many epidemic diseases,
Descend and take possession of the Spirit-medium, assist [with] true words.
The True Lord of Compassionate Assistance transmitted secret methods,[32]
Evil perverse [spirits] and evil ghosts are transformed into dust and smoke.
The temple has Thirty-six Generals,
Evil perverse [spirits] and evil ghosts are all completely terrified.
Completely healing gangrenous ulcers and mothers in difficult birth,
Eliminating disaster and sending down blessing, the lady immortal manifests.
[If someone] has a problem, concentrate [your] mind, urge [with] invocations and summon,
When [the goddess] comes [in] a cloud and mist, truly manifesting in person.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Immortal Lady Leè personally descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

紀氏仙姑

天醫十紀氏　　捧藥來救苦
手把金葫蘆　　頭戴青蓮髻

[32] The True Man (or here, lord) of Compassionate Assistance 慈濟真人 / 真君 is Bǎoshēng Dàdì's 保生大帝 title; this here is yet another indication of how Bǎoshēng Dàdì has become identified as an Ancestral Master of the Ritual Master tradition.

遇災救苦難　　遇事渡眾生
唸吾神號咒　　顯現在壇前
阮是天仙女　　發誓救女人
千災即消滅　　萬事必自生
弟子壇前請　　紀氏仙姑親降臨
神兵猴急如律令

Heaven's "second", tenth [maiden] Geè,[33]
Bringing medicine, [she] comes to rescue [from] suffering.
Hand holding a golden gourd,
Head wearing green-lotus top-knot.
Meeting with disaster, [she] rescues [from] suffering and difficulty
Meeting with problems, [she] delivers the multitude of living beings.
Recite My divine invocation stanza,
[And I] manifest before the altar.
Originally [I] was a celestial immortal woman,
[I] swore an oath to rescue women.
A thousand disasters immediately vanish,
Ten thousand affairs must arise of their own accord.
Thy disciple before the altar summons,
Immortal Lady Geè personally descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

九天玄女
謹請九天玄女娘　　騰雲駕霧附福祥
符水救民功不渺　　桃條打鬼法無邊
天上常常隨娘法　　地下茫茫隨娘剛
弓鞋獻出三江口　　角巾拔落九重天
吾是三師三女子　　降落桃園洞仙女
身在蘆山傳法子　　救苦救難到凡間
弟子壇前專拜請　　九天玄女親降臨
神兵火急如律令

I reverently summon the Mysterious Woman of the Nine Heavens,
Rising up on a cloud and riding in a mist, bringing blessing and fortune.
Talisman-water to rescue the people, merit most miraculous,[34]
[With a] peach-rod to beat ghosts, ritual power without limit.

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[33] Other versions, such as CXT 44 specify that Immortal Lady Geè is associated with the Lower Realm 下界 , i.e. the underworld. The first of this quartet/pentad, Immortal Lady Keeń 勤氏仙姑 is likewise linked with the Upper Realm. The symbolism associated with Lady Huĥ 何 is, however, more proper to the underworld. All of the invocations are largely identical

[34] This line likely corrupt, and I have not literally rendered the problematic 功不渺 "merit not miniscule?"; CXT 37 has 符水救民功妙應 "merit [causing] marvelous response."

In heaven always following the Lady's ritual,
Under the earth in the dark depts. following the Lady as she paces the mainstay.[35]
Bow-shoes offered forth at the mouth of three rivers,
Horn and headscarf taken off and dropped from the nine layered heavens.
I am the Third Master's Third Girl,
Descended to the Peach-garden, cavern immortal lady.
At Lúshān [I] personally received transmission as a ritual method disciple,
[To] rescue from suffering and save from difficulty [I] descended into the mortal world.
Thy disciple before the altar in concentration bows to summon,
Mysterious Woman of the Nine Heavens personally descend.
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

娘　媽
五更雞啼雞報曉　請娓娘媽來梳粧
梳娓真珠龍鳳墜　到娓粧娓琉璃光
頭上金針十二對　腳踏弓鞋三寸長
拔落金針作橋梁　脫落弓鞋作橋板
新做羅裙十八幅　幅幅看來香射香
新做涼傘遮娘媽　娘媽騎馬去遊鄉
南去遊鄉人來請　北去遊鄉人來迎
去時金針插港口　返來金花插爐前
弟子壇前專拜請　請娓娘媽親降臨
神兵火急如律令

[At the] fifth watch the rooster crows, the rooster heralds dawn,
To invite Lady Bwei-Mà to come comb [her hair] and adorn [herself].
[The Lady] Bwei-[Mà's] comb of inlaid pearl, with dragon-phoenixes descending,
Down to where Lady Bwei-Mà adorns herself in lustrous lapis glow.
On [her] head twelve pairs of golden hairpins,
[Her] feet stepping [with] bow-shoes, three inches long.
Pulling out her hairpins, [they] fall to form bridge-beams,
Taking off [her] bow-shoes, they fall to form bridge-boards.[36]
New-made gauze-skirt of eighteen bolts [of fabric],
Bolts and bolts [of fabric], rolled out to embroider love-birds.[37]
New-made parasol shades the Mother,
The Mother rides a horse and goes to roam the villages.
[She] goes south to roam the villages, people come and summon,
[She] goes north to roam the villages, people come and welcome.
When [she] goes she plants her golden hairpin in the harbor,

[35] Here reading 罡 for 剛 (Mínnán homophones gonḡ). CXT 37 has "follow the Lady as she goes" 隨娘行.
[36] This image is, like previous references to bridges meant to indicate the ritual bridge.
[37] Reading this lower couplet from CXT 38 幅幅牽來綉鴛鴦， which involves several near homophones and is generally preferable to the HST "bolts and bolts, come and see incense sending forth incense" 幅幅看來香射香.

When [she] returns she plants the golden flowers before the incense burner.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Summon Mother Bwei-Mà personally descend!
Spirit-soldiers, urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

哪吒元帥
謹請靈羅國女三太子　太子七歲展神通
頭梳雙髻紅羅帳　手執金鎗拋綉球
八萬四千黑白將　牛頭馬面面前形
刀鎗劍戟如雲雨　三壇廟上展真靈
弟子壇前專拜請　哪吒元帥速降臨
火急如律令

[pivot to male god melody]
I reverently summon the Third Prince of the Líng-luĥ Kingdom,[38]
[When] seven years old, the Prince displayed spiritual powers.
Head combed into two topknot-buns, red gauze sash,[39]
Hand holding a golden spear, tossing embroidered balls.
Eighty-four thousand black-and-white generals,
Ox-head and Horse-face, before [your] face their forms [appear].
Sabers, spears, swords and pikes like clouds of rain,
Atop the Three Altars Temple reveal true spiritual power.
Thy disciple before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Prime Marshal Ľuh-chiâ swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!
[With three drumbeats, the ritual concludes, the Central Reverend and troupe-members all make a curtsey to the altar and return their instruments to the altar. If there are no further ritual stages, then usually the various ritual implements are packed up and put away; the incense which the Central Reverend has placed, together with the old-fashioned-paper, is left burning in its pan at the outer edge of the fǎ-cháng 法場 until completely burned away.]

Celebration of Longevity Segment (for gods' birthdays)
祝壽用之咒語

三十六官將
謹請三十六將大神通　鳳毛改穢眾金剛
八百化身驅邪祟　九天降主龍樹王

[38] Following Ānpíng texts which have the Mínnán homophone 裡 leè instead of 女 leè. The several CXT Third Prince invocations do not have this line.
[39] Ānpíng sources have "red gauze sash"紅羅帶 duaĥ, which I have followed here over the HST 帳 diūĥ, which means a curtain or veil. "Sash' is preferable because this appears to be iconography depicting the Third Prince as a Red-Headed Ritual Master, complete with red headband. The Three Altars 三壇 symbolism which follows increases the likelihood of this interpretation.

北極真武大將軍　　天王天獻二聖尊
高天聖凡聖乾坤　　張蕭劉連鎮四方
中壇哪吒大元帥　　統領天兵展神通
金卒二將把天門　　趙岳元帥斬五瘟
捉縛枷鎖四大將　　馬琥珈瓔二威尊
五顯靈官馬花公　　旗帥英烈二溫康
靈通高高真顯現　　王孫三賽三相公
康趙黑白四元帥　　勤何李紀四仙姑
吞精吃鬼二大將　　降龍伏虎大慈悲
三壇官將隨吾請　　齊到壇前展神通
弟子壇前專拜請　　三壇官將速降臨
火急如律令

I reverently summon the Thirty-six Generals of great spiritual power,
Vanquisher of demons, Great Vajra [of the] Impure Traces,[40]
Eight-hundred transformation-bodies, drive out perverse hauntings,
The Nine-heavens Lord of the Religion, King Dragon-tree [Nāgārjuna].[41]
True Warrior of the North Pole, Grand General,
Tiān-Péng and Tiān-Yoù, two holy venerables.[42]
The Assisting-Saint of High Heaven, follows the [trigrams of] heaven and earth.[43]
Diōĥ, Siaû, Laú, Leń guard the four quarters,
Prime Marshal of the Central Altar Ṯuh-chiâ,
Commanding celestial soldiers, displaying spiritual power.
The two generals Dinnḡ and Sheeñ bar heaven's gate,[44]
Prime Marshals Diōĥ and Gaǩ slay the Five Empidemics.
Seize, Fetters, Cangue, and Lock, Four Great Generals,

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[40] Reconstructed line from other Ānpíng and CXT, none of which have 穢跡 Impure Traces, but which all attempt to make sense of the term in different ways. CXT 58 has 降魔氣穢大金光, the MSG folio 伏魔倏穢眾金剛.

[41] Reading from the preferable CXT 58 九天教主龍樹王; the Black-Head texts have 九天降主龍樹王, "Lord of submission".

[42] Reconstructed from MSG 天篷天獻二聖尊, reading 天佑 for 天獻, as clearly this is meant to indicate the Four Saints of the North Pole, as the next MSG couplet makes clear: 高天翊聖隨乾坤. The identity of the Four Saints has become obscured in the other sources: CXT has 天皇天后二位尊. 高天協聖炳乾坤, though we have near homophones between 天皇天后 for 天篷天佑. As to Tiān-yòu 天猷, evidently due to the similarity between the character 猷 yòu and the abbreviated form of 獻 xiàn written 献 （猷献), in southern Táiwān even the Língbǎo priests refer to Tiān-yòu (in Mínnán) as "Ṯen-heń", thus associating the character 献 with this deity, rather than 猷. This not only accounts for the particular written form in the Minor Rite sources, it also confirms that linguistic and orthographic drift is not limited to the Ritual Masters, but has occurred within Daoist lineages as well, even regarding a major deity who is often depicted in the Jiào altar.

[43] Again following MSG 高天翊聖隨乾坤.

[44] Following MSG 鄧辛二將把天門; HST and CXT both corrupt, the former more so, while the latter has 鄧率二將把天門, indicating more clearly the correct characters, with 率 for 辛.

Mahoraja and Garuda, two mighty venerables.
The Spiritual Officer Mà Hua-gonĝ of the Five Manifestations,
Flag-marshal, heroic ardor, the two Uñ (Wēn) and Konĝ (Kāng).[45]
[With] spiritual power each manifests,[46]
The Third Minister Third Emissary Ōng-suñ,[47]
The Four Prime Marshals Uñ, Konĝ, Mà, and Diõħ,[48]
The Four Immortal Ladies Keeń, Huĺ, Leè, Geè.
The Two Great Generals Spirit-swallower and Ghost-eater,
The Two Venerables Dragon-vanquisher and Tiger-tamer,[49]
Official Generals of the Three Altars, follow my summons,[50]
In even [ranks] arrive before the altar and display spiritual power.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Official Generals of the Three Altars swiftly descend!
Urgent as Fire, as the Law commands!

太乙真君

太乙洞中金真君　　頭戴七星步彩雲
手執七星伏魔劍　　斬斷陽中百鬼精
若有邪魔並邪煞　　聞吾符水不留停
一點東方甲乙木　　清洞清河並清濁
二點南方丙丁火　　十方天兵在壇過
三點西方庚辛金　　斬斷人間並疫神
四點北方壬癸水　　列陳排兵斬惡鬼
五點中央戊巳土　　大開天門並地厚
人有災難焚香請　　投入三壇鬼神驚
弟子壇前專拜請　　太乙真君速降臨

火急如律令

True Lord of the Supreme Unity Cavern,
Head wearing the Seven Stars, pacing colored clouds,
Hand holing a Seven Star Demon-subduing Sword,
Slaying and cutting-off the hundred [kinds of] ghosts and spirits in the bright [human] realm.
If there be perverse demons and perverse Killer-spirits,
Hear My talisman-water [efficacious] without ceasing.
One drop in the Eastern Quarter, the Gaȟ-Yiṫ Wood

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[45] Followingg 旗帥 This line appears corrupt in all versions, at present I have no better reconstruction.
[46] Reading 各各 for the homophones 高高 and 哥哥, which appear in various versions and various invocations.
[47] Following MSG source reading the homophone 使 saì for 賽 saĭ.
[48] Reading the preferable CXT 58 溫康馬趙四元帥.
[49] Following CXT 58 降龍伏虎二位尊.
[50] CXT 58 continues with more standard figures of this particular pantheon, which have been elided here, but which are represented in door gods iconography and other representations.

Purify the cavern, purify the river and purify the stagnant water.
Two drops in the Southern Quarter Binnĝ-Dinnĝ Fire,
Celestial soldiers of the Ten Directions are stationed before the altar.
Three drops in the Western Quarter Ginnĝ-Sheeñ Metal,
Slay and cut-off epidemic spirits in the Human Realm.
Four drops in the Norther Quarter Leeń-Gueì Water,
Ranks of soldiers arrayed in formation slay evil ghosts.
Five drops in the Center Suŭ-Sū Earth,
Open wide Heaven's Gate and the depths of the Earth.
If people have disasters and difficulties [let them] burn incense and summon,
Enter into the Three Altars, ghosts and gods are terrified.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
True Lord of the Supreme Unity swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

張聖者神咒

謹請法天張聖者　　世居福郡壇行章
赤腳修來行正法　　普陀廟上展威靈
金沙轎上翻剛斗　　青龍潭裡坐修行
腳踏火輪驅邪穢　　手執寶劍斬妖精
行雲致雨沾世界　　書符出相度凡人
護國佑民興廟上　　代天興化救萬民
四十五年嚴無世　　遊行國土出行程
辰月卯日輝天地　　化身顯現在壇前
左右伽羅馬官將　　功曹馬虎二位尊
三界祖師吾太宰　　三壇祖師江舍人
宮有劉簫連聖者　　協力符水救萬民
弟子壇前專拜請　　張公法主速降臨

火急如律令

I reverently summon Saint Diōñ of Ritual Heaven,
In the world he lived in Fú[zhōu] Prefecture, [and set up an] altar to submit petitions.
Barefoot he comes practicing the rectifying ritual method,
Feet stepping on a wheel of fire, driving away perverse filth,
Moving clouds and making rain arrive, moisten the world.
Protecting the country, blessing the people, give rise to temples on high,
On behalf of Heaven, in Xīng-huà [Prefecture] save the common people.
Forty-five years in strict[discipline] without [later] generations,
Roaming about in the land of the country, going out to move soldiers.[51]

[51] Following CXT 153 遊行國土出行兵，the text here reads "roaming the territory of country, he goes out to walk his course." Ānpíng sources are the same as HST; CFTG has 遊行國土救生民 "roaming the land of the country, saving the common people."

On a mǎo-day of the third month [he] transformed and flew to heaven,[52]
[His] transformation body manifests before the altar.
[On his] left and right, Garuda and Official and General Ma,[53]
Merit-Official and Mahoraja, two venerables.[54]
Ancestral Master of the Three Realms, Supreme Protector Loú,[55]
Ancestral Master of the Three Altars, Retainer Gangˆ.
Moreover there are the Saints Laú, Siaû, and Leń,[56]
Combine [their] strength in the talisman-water and save the common people.[57]
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Sire Zhāng, Lord-of-the-Rite swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

蕭聖者神咒

拜請輔天蕭聖者　　少年捨身入瑜珈
全無師父傳法界　　法主交持十八年
忽然登空相會遇　　主持扶福永無災
戊子九月三十夜　　亥子交持十月初
二十八歲功行滿　　立溪池上坐蓮花
千兵萬將來迎接　　接引蕭公入瑜珈
諸員官將來伺候　　治瘟破廟打鸞駕
弟子壇前專拜請　　簫公法主速降臨

火急如律令

I bow to summon Supporter-of-Heaven, Saint Siaû,
While young he renounced [secular] life and entered Yoga.

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[52] Following the preferable MSG text: 辰月卯日飛天化.
[53] While CXT 153 has a similar line, the reference evidently being to Spiritual Officer Mǎ 馬靈官. However, MSG has 左右珈馬琥官將， which suggests both Garuda [伽儸=迦樓羅]and Mahoraja [虎馬儸=摩睺羅伽] spirits. See Digital Dictionary of Buddhism entries 迦樓羅, and 摩睺羅伽, and for the latter Liú Zhì-wàn (1974).
[54] Again interpreting 馬虎 Ma-hoù as ultimately derived from or in attenuated reference to 摩睺羅伽.
[55] Here following the preferable Pénghú CFTG text which has 三界祖師盧太保, this reading is augured by the lower couplet with Retainer Gangˆ (Jiāng) 江舍人, a subordinate deity in the 36 Generals and Officials; hence these lines are all describing subordinates in broadly spatial relationships or at least in contrasting pairs. Táinán-area sources all have 三界祖師吾太宰 "Ancestral Master of the Three Realms, I am the Supreme Minister," which disrupts the obvious pairing of subordinates.
[56] Following the Ānpíng MSG source which reads 更有劉簫連聖者. The Pénghú CFTG has 更有劉連二聖者, reflecting the variable groupings which characterize these "Lords of the Rite" 法主公, which often include others such as Jiongˆ 章 . CXT has 更有飛天大聖者, also a reference to one of these Lords of the Rite.
[57] While all my Táinán-area sources are the same here, the Pénghú CFTG has "Combine strength [to] cure disease, save the multitude of living beings." 協力治病渡眾生.

Completely without a Master, he received transmission of the pacing methods,[58]
Lord of the Rite did battle for eighteen years,[59]
Suddenly he met with Sire Dinnḡ 鄧公,[60]
Presiding and supporting with fortune, forever without disaster.
At age twenty-eight, his cultivation of merit was complete,
Standing upon a stream and pool, siting in a lotus flower.
A thousand soldiers and ten-thousand generals come to receive and welcome,
Receive and lead Sire Siaû into Yoga.
All the Officials and Generals come to wait upon [him],
Heal epidemics, destroy temples, smite the phoenix-sedan [of the gods].
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Sire Siaû, Lord-of-the-Rite swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

劉聖者神咒

謹請七臺劉聖者　　降龍伏虎大慈悲
獅子巖前伏猛虎　　金鎗樹下降青龍
巖中修行四十載　　劉公法主展神通
七星圓明照天下　　龍樹焦章入瑜珈
弟子壇前專拜請　　劉公法主速降臨
火急如律令

I reverently summon Saint Laú of Seven Platforms [Mountain],
Vanquishing dragons and subduing tigers, great compassion.
Before the Lion Cliff he subdued the fierce tiger,
Under the tree of golden spears he subdued the green dragon.
Within the cliff he practiced cultivation for forty years,
Sire Laú, Lord-of-the-Rite, display spiritual powers.
Seven Stars, round and bright, illuminate all-under-Heaven,
[King] Dragon-tree [recruits Sire] Jionĝ to enter Yoga,[61]
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Sire Laú, Lord-of-the-Rite, swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!.

連聖者神咒

謹請七臺連聖者　　林氏六郎有神通
剪髮光頭為吾愿　　少年捨身入瑜珈

[58] Here following the preferable Ānpíng MSG source which reads 全無師父傳罡法; this is supported by the near-homophone in CXT 154 全無師父傳功法.
[59] CXT may be preferable here, "Disciples received instruction for eighteen years"法子交時拾八年.
[60] Following MSG 弗然鄧公相會遇, with the main differences all near homophones.
[61] Reading 招 jiaû for 焦 jiaû, and taking 章 to refer to the deified Tantric adept often worshipped along side these same figures.

惟見世間多疾病　　扶攝生童在壇前
不怕天高並地厚　　不怕山搖共海深
不怕城隍並邪廟　　不怕為何不正神
與吾爐中隨吾降　　行罡步斗到壇前
弟子壇前專拜請　　連公法主速降臨
火急如律令

I reverently summon Saint Leń of Seven Platforms [Mountain],
The Sixth Lad Leeḿ has spiritual power.
[I] singe of my hair [and go] bald-headed as my vow,[62]
As a youth he renounced [secular] life and entered Yoga.
On account of seeing so much sickness in the world,
Take hold of the raw youth before the altar. [63]
Unafraid of heaven high, nor of the depths of the earth,
Unafraid of the mountain's distance, nor of the ocean's depths.
Unafraid of the City God nor [any] Earth God temple,[64]
Unafraid of any unorthodox spirit.
Together with Me, descend into the incense burner,
Walk the mainstay and pace the dipper down before the altar.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Sire Leń, Lord-of-the-Rite swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands!

三十三天神咒
謹請三十三天都元帥　　統領天兵下遙台
金鎗一轉天門開　　綉球獻出五方來
頭上日月輝乾坤　　足步七星毫光大
扶佐三壇真如在　　主宰法界奇英才
龍王壇前威猛烈　　飛沙走石洞中開
收斬東海蛟龍滅　　治病救苦速消災
三歲郎君朝北斗　　八萬天兵四邊排
弟子壇前專拜請　　哪吒元帥速降臨
火急如律令

I reverently summon the Capitoline Prime Marshal of the Thirty-Third Heaven,
Commanding celestial soldiers, descend to the distant platform.
With one turn of the golden spear, heaven's gate opens,
Embroidered balls are offered forth and go to the five directions.
Upon [his] head the sun and moon, resplendent with the [trigrams of] heaven and earth,
Feet pace the Seven Stars, a great brilliant light.

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[62] CXT 156 he simply cuts off his top-knot 剪髻光頭隨吾愿.
[63] Following CXT 156 為見世間多疾病 扶攝生童在壇前
[64] Following both CXT 156 and MSG which have 不怕城隍及社廟. Note Mínnán homophones 邪 shiā 社 shiā

Support and assist the Three Altars [Ritual Master] as though truly present,
Prime minister of the ritual realm, remarkable heroic talent.
Before the altar of the Dragon-king, [display] mighty and fierce ardor,
Flying sand and rolling stones, within the cavern opens.
Behead and destroy the fell-dragon of the eastern sea,
Cure disease, save from suffering and swiftly eliminate disasters.
When three years old the Lad-Lord faced the Northern Dipper,
Eighty-thousand celestial soldiers arrayed on four sides.
Thy disciple, before the altar, in concentration bows to summon,
Prime Marshal Łuh-chiâ swiftly descend!
Urgent as fire, as the Law commands

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